MEN
AT
THE HELM

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In Cheapside the populace took his horses from the carriage, and drew it up King Street with exultant huzzas.—*p.* 193.

THE MEN AT THE HELM:

Biographical Sketches

OF

GREAT ENGLISH STATESMEN

BY W. H. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

"England's illustrious sons of long, long ages."—WORDSWORTH.

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PREFACE.

THE object I have had in view in the compilation of this volume is easily explained.

That it contains little with which the well educated reader is not already familiar I readily admit, but its contents are drawn from sources not usually accessible to youthful students. It is intended, therefore, to furnish them with a more comprehensive summary of the careers and policy of our most distinguished statesmen than common school histories afford, and to supply a companion, as it were, and a sequel to those elementary works. At the same time I venture to hope that it may amuse a leisure hour, and prove of some interest and value as a book of reference, for more advanced readers.

I trust I may claim the merit of having drawn my statements from the best and most recent authorities, and of having avoided to a considerable extent all political prejudice or party feeling. I confess I do not love to dwell at any length upon the faults and errors of men who have served their country with zeal and ability, if not always with judgment or wisdom. I have but little sympathy with those critical observers who are always busy in counting the spots upon the sun; and in compiling these "plain, unvarnished" memoirs I hope I have been equally ready to do justice

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to Whig and Tory, and to recognize in each what was honest, virtuous, and patriotic.

These memoirs are chronologically arranged, and glance at most of the principal events in the political history of England, from the accession of Charles I. to the fall of the Coalition Ministry in 1854. Each is complete in itself; but I have endeavoured, when sketching the lives of contemporaries, to avoid all tedious repetitions. As convenient for reference, a list has been added of the different administrations which have enjoyed power, from the accession of Queen Anne to the present time.

I am not aware that the lives of our statesmen have ever before been brought together in a volume of moderate compass, notwithstanding the interest which necessarily attaches to history at once so romantic and matter-of-fact. We have good reason, however, to be proud of those men who stood at the helm while the ship of the State was toiling through laborious seas, and buffeted by perilous storms. In fair weather we are too apt to forget how much we owe to their constancy, courage, and skill—to the brains which guided, and the hearts which never despaired of, the fortunes of the commonwealth. May Englishmen ever treasure as a precious heritage the fame of a Hampden, a Walpole, and a Chatham—a Pitt, a Canning, and a Peel!

W. H. D. A.

Norwood, *May*, 1862

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PREFACE	3
A LIST OF OUR ADMINISTRATIONS FROM 1702 TO 1862	7
THOMAS WENTWORTH, EARL OF STRAFFORD . . .	11
JOHN HAMPDEN	34
EDWARD HYDE, EARL OF CLARENDON . . .	70
HENRY ST. JOHN, VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE . .	85
SIR ROBERT WALPOLE	105
WILLIAM PITT, EARL OF CHATHAM	123
WILLIAM PITT	159
THE MARQUIS OF LONDONDERRY (LORD CASTLEREAGH)	199
THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING . . .	227
SIR ROBERT PEEL	256
THE EARL OF ABERDEEN	305

*** *An Index will be found at the end of the Volume.*

A LIST OF ADMINISTRATIONS

FROM 1702 TO 1862.

REIGN OF QUEEN ANNE.

A.D. 1702.—Earl Godolphin, Earl of Nottingham, Duke of Marlborough.
A.D. 1711.—Harley, Earl of Oxford, Henry St. John.
A.D. 1714.—Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, Dukes of Shrewsbury, Somerset, and Argyle.

REIGN OF GEORGE I.

A.D. 1714.—Craggs, Aislabie, Earl of Carlisle, Lord Stanhope.
A.D. 1721.—Sir Robert Walpole.

REIGN OF GEORGE II.

A.D. 1742.—Carteret, Pulteney, and others.
A.D. 1743.—Henry Pelham, Duke of Newcastle, Sir Thomas Robinson, William Pitt.
A.D. 1754.—Duke of Newcastle, Grenville, Henry Fox, William Pitt, Murray, Legge.
A.D. 1757.—William Pitt, Legge, Duke of Devonshire, Earl Temple.
A.D. 1758.—Duke of Newcastle, William Pitt, Henry Fox, George Grenville.

REIGN OF GEORGE III.

A.D. 1761.—Earl of Bute, and subordinates.
A.D. 1763.—George Grenville, and subordinates.
A.D. 1765.—Marquis of Rockingham, Duke of Newcastle, General Conway.
A.D. 1766.—Pitt (Earl of Chatham), Lord Camden, Lord Shelburne, General Conway, Duke of Grafton, Charles Townshend.
A.D. 1770.—Lord North, Henry Dundas, and others.
A.D. 1781.—Marquis of Rockingham, Lord Shelburne, Fox, Lord Thurlow, Lord John Cavendish.
A.D. 1782.—Lord Shelburne, William Pitt, Lord Thurlow.
A.D. 1783.—Lord North, Charles James Fox, and Duke of Portland.
A.D. 1784.—William Pitt, Lord Thurlow, Earl Camden, Dundas, Lord Mulgrave, Lord Castlereagh.
A.D. 1801.—Henry Addington, Harrowby, and others.
A.D. 1803.—William Pitt, Dundas (Lord Melville), Canning, Castlereagh, Harrowby, Thurlow, Erskine.
A.D. 1806.—Lord Grenville, Charles James Fox, Lord Howick, Earl Temple, Lord Henry Petty.
A.D. 1809.—Mr. Perceval, Lord Castlereagh, Canning, Duke of Portland, Lord Hawkesbury.
A.D. 1812.—Lord Liverpool, Castlereagh, Peel, Palmerston, Eldon, Lord Sidmouth.

REIGN OF GEORGE IV. (A.D. 1820.)

A.D. 1826.—Lord Liverpool, Canning, Peel, Eldon, Huskisson.
A.D. 1827.—Canning, Huskisson, Duke of Clarence, Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Dudley.
A.D. 1827.—Lord Goderich, Huskisson, etc.
A.D. 1828.—Duke of Wellington, Peel, Goulburn, Lord Lyndhurst, Huskisson, Palmerston, Grant, and Lord Ellenborough.

REIGN OF WILLIAM IV. (A.D. 1830.)

A.D. 1830.—Earl Grey, Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, Lord Brougham, Sir James Graham, Lord Melbourne, and Hon. E. Stanley (now Earl of Derby).
A.D. 1832.—The Earl Grey ministry resign, but return to office on the Duke of Wellington failing to form a government.
A.D. 1834.—Lord Melbourne, Lord Althorpe, Lord John Russell, Lord Palmerston, and others.
A.D. 1834.—Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, Sir James Graham, Lord Stanley, Goulburn, Lord Lyndhurst, Earl of Aberdeen.
A.D. 1835.—Lord Melbourne, Lord John Russell, Lord Palmerston, Lord Truro, Sir George Grey, Sir Charles Wood, Spring Rice, and others.

REIGN OF QUEEN VICTORIA. (A.D. 1837.)

A.D. 1841.—Sir Robert Peel, Duke of Wellington, Lord Wharncliffe, Earl of Aberdeen, Lord Lyndhurst, Sir James Graham, Lord Stanley, Goulburn, Ellenborough.
A.D. 1846.—Lord John Russell, Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord Palmerston, Earl Grey, Earl of Clarendon, Lord Campbell, Sir G. Grey, Sir C. Wood.
A.D. 1852.—Earl of Derby, D'Israeli, Walpole, Lord St. Leonards, Malmesbury, Pakington, Herries.
A.D. 1852.—Earl of Aberdeen, Lord John Russell, Lord Palmerston, Sir James Graham, Gladstone, Lansdowne, Duke of Newcastle, Lord Cranworth, and Sidney Herbert.
A.D. 1855.—Lord Palmerston, Lord John Russell, and as above.
A.D. 1858.—Earl of Derby, D'Israeli, Lord Chelmsford, Earl of Hardwicke, Walpole, Malmesbury, Sir E. B. Lytton, Lord Stanley, Sir J. Pakington.
A.D. 1859.—Lord Palmerston again takes office. His government at present (A.D. 1862) includes Earl Russell, Gladstone, Lord Westbury, Duke of Somerset, Duke of Newcastle, Sir C. Wood, Sir G. C. Lewis, Sir George Grey, Duke of Argyle, Milner Gibson, and Earl Granville.

THE MEN AT THE HELM.

THOMAS WENTWORTH, EARL OF STRAFFORD.

(A.D. 1593—1641.)

"If he may
Find mercy in the law, 'tis his; if none,
Let him not seek it of us."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE reign of Charles I., so fertile in spirits of heroic mould and masculine intellect, produced many better men, but scarcely one abler, than the arbitrary minister and "thorough"-going statesman, the famous Earl of Strafford. Had his genius been less brilliant, his powers of administration less remarkable, he might, however, have been a better councillor for the king whom he served, and who betrayed him.

Thomas Wentworth was the eldest son of Sir William Wentworth, of Wentworth-Woodhouse, in the county of York, and was born in Chancery Lane, London, on the 13th of April, 1593. After being educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, he proceeded, as was then usual with the sons of gentlemen of family, to the Continent, accompanied by his tutor, a Mr. John Greenwood, whose virtues and abilities commanded his respect

even to his later life. He returned to England in 1613, and married, when scarce twenty-one, the Lady Margaret Clifford, eldest daughter of the Earl of Cumberland. In the following year he succeeded, on his father's death, to the baronetcy and the ancestral estates, and led, for a considerable period, the life of an opulent country gentleman. The strong brain and fiery ambition which his gay and polished exterior concealed were, however, inert, not extinct, as the fires of Vesuvius are not the less active in its bosom though no lava-tide rush devouringly down its slopes. He entered public life in 1621, as one of the members for Yorkshire, and immediately ranked himself on the side of the opposition. This was the first Parliament that James I. had called for six years, and its proceedings might have taught his son a lesson in reference to the spirit of independence which was daily acquiring fresh strength in England. Monopolies were assailed with unabating vigour; monopolists were punished; officials suspected of fraud or corruption were summarily dismissed from their offices; the learned Bacon fell an unjust victim to this *rabies puniendi;* and the unfortunate believers in the infallibility of the Pope of Rome were harassed to the death. In all this vigorous procedure, Sir Thomas Wentworth was a zealous and enthusiastic co-operator.

In 1622 his first wife died, without issue, and was buried at York. Three years later, and he was married to his second wife, Arabella, second daughter of John Holles, Earl of Clare (24th February, 1625). This lady is described "not only as having been very beautiful, but as having possessed all those mental qualities which were likely to endear her to such a man as Straf-

ford. He appears to have loved her sincerely, and at her death to have deeply lamented her loss. It was of her, and of the children which she bequeathed him, that he subsequently spoke in so touching a manner at his trial. The enemies of Strafford, indeed, raised a scandalous report, which accused him of having been the occasion of her death. It was asserted, that having been accused by her of intriguing with another woman, the proofs of which had accidentally come to her knowledge, he struck her a blow on the breast, and that, being with child at the time, her death was the consequence. The story, there is every reason to believe, was an utter falsehood."*

The Lady Arabella died in October, 1631, leaving issue—William, restored in 1665 to the earldom of Strafford; Anne, who married Edward Watson, Earl of Rockingham; and Arabella, afterwards the wife of John M'Carthy, Viscount Mountcashel.

In the first and second Parliaments of King Charles, Wentworth still maintained a resolute adherence to the principles of the opposition, and with his own nervous and manly eloquence denounced the arbitrary measures of the court. His trenchant speech and resolute action so angered Charles and the Duke of Buckingham that, in conjunction with Eliot and Hampden, he was flung into prison, nor were they released until the necessity of summoning another Parliament induced the king to purchase what popularity he might by a seasonable show of lenity (A.D. 1626-7).

On the 23rd of August, 1628, the Duke of Buckingham was slain at Portsmouth by John Felton. This event, singularly enough, was the turning point of

* Jesse's "Memoirs of the Court of Charles I."

Wentworth's fortunes. As long as Buckingham lived no other favourite could hope to sway the weak mind of Charles, and Wentworth remained a vehement member of the opposition, because only in the opposition was there room for the free display of his bold and passionate genius. But the stage was now cleared, and by some mysterious free-masonry it became evident to Charles, who stood in sad need of an able councillor, that such a councillor—a man of undaunted purpose, surpassing eloquence, unflinching personal courage—might be found in Sir Thomas Wentworth. The bargain was soon made. He became Baron Wentworth, Viscount Wentworth, lord lieutenant of Yorkshire, and president of the council of the north (A.D. 1629); and in return he abandoned the principles for which he had already contended and suffered. The renegade's shame could not be concealed beneath the peer's purple, and out of very despair Strafford became the most arbitrary foe of freedom, the most unscrupulous minion of tyranny. With political renegades, as with bigots, there is a peculiar pleasure in lighting the fires of persecution, and none are so bitter towards their victims as they who have been their friends and betrayers!

With Laud and Strafford for his advisers, it could not be hoped that Charles would enter upon any liberal course of policy. In truth, the complaint they made against him was, that he would not grasp eagerly enough at the absolutism they proffered him. Of this famous trio Strafford was the leading spirit, and if genius and resolution could have crushed out the flickering embers of freedom, by Strafford the iniquitous work would have been achieved. His letters to Laud breathe the most tyrannical sentiments. It is a two-edged

sword, not a sceptre, that he would place in the sovereign's hands. In his lord-lieutenancy of Ireland, which he held (A.D. 1633) in conjunction with the presidency of the north, he ably carried out the doctrines which he enunciated. "Thorough" was his maxim, and "Thorough" his unswerving policy.

"Many enemies of public liberty," says Lord Macaulay,* "have been distinguished by their private virtues. But Strafford was the same throughout; as was the statesman, such was the kinsman, and such the lover. His conduct towards Lord Mountmorris is recorded by Clarendon. For a word which can scarcely be called rash, which could not have been made the subject of an ordinary civil action, the lord lieutenant dragged a man of high rank, married to a relative of that saint [his wife Arabella] about whom he whimpered to the peers, before a tribunal of slaves. Sentence of death was passed. Everything but death was inflicted. Yet the treatment which Lord Ely experienced was still more scandalous. That nobleman was thrown into prison, in order to compel him to settle his estate in a manner agreeable to his daughter-in-law, whom, as there is every reason to believe, Strafford had debauched. These stories do not rest on vague report. The historians most partial to the minister admit their truth, and censure them in terms which, though too lenient for the occasion, are still severe. These facts are alone sufficient to justify the appellation with which Pym branded him, 'the Wicked Earl.'"

It was in October, 1632, previous to his appointment to the lord-deputyship of Ireland, that Strafford†

* Macaulay's "Critical and Historical Essays."

† I make use of the title by which the great statesman is

married his third wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Godfrey Rhodes, Knight, of Great Houghton, in Yorkshire. That even into his social life and family connections he carried his favourite doctrine of "thorough" may, I think, be reasonably inferred from a letter which he addressed to his wife within six weeks of their nuptials.

"November 19, 1632.

"DEAR BESS,

"Your first lines were welcome unto me, and I will keep them, in regard I take them to be full, as of kindness so of truth. It is no presumption for you to write unto me; the fellowship of marriage ought to carry with it more of love and equality than any other apprehension. So I desire it may ever be betwixt us; nor shall it ever break on my part. Virtue is the highest value we can set upon ourselves in this world, and the chief which others are to esteem us by. That preserved, we become capable of the noblest impressions which can be imparted unto us. *You succeed in this family two of the rarest ladies of their time.* Equal them in those excellent dispositions of your mind, and you become every ways equally worthy of anything that they had, or that the rest of the world can give. And be you ever assured to be by me cherished and assisted the best I can through the whole course of my life, wherein I shall be no other to you than I was to them, to wit,

"Your loving husband,

"WENTWORTH."

Strafford had now reached the climax of his suc-

best known, but he did not receive the earldom until January 12, 1640

cess. He was the virtual ruler of England and Ireland. His was the brain that conceived, his the energy that executed every measure adapted to increase the power of the crown, and crush the spirit of the people. When the Scots in 1639 rose against the episcopacy which Charles sought to impose upon them, it was Strafford who counselled a warlike policy. When the Short Parliament refused the supplies necessary for the army, it was Strafford who advised the king to its peremptory dissolution. A severe illness which seized him, early in 1640, only seemed to embitter his daring and vengeful spirit, and at his instigation several Yorkshire gentlemen who refused to submit to the arbitrary requisitions of the court were, as he phrased it, "laid up by the heels." He actually seemed to revel in the storm of obloquy that gathered around him, and confident in the resources of his genius, inspired by a boundless ambition, supported by an indomitable pride, faced his enemies with scornful exultation.

An army was at length assembled on the borders of Scotland, and though so weak as to be unable to keep his seat on horseback, Strafford set out, with the king, to assume the command. He soon discovered that no spirit of loyalty animated his soldiers, and that they regarded the campaign before them with undisguised repugnance. Already Puritanism had crept into the ranks, and to the majority of the army episcopacy was as distasteful as it was to the Scotch Covenanters whom they were called upon to fight. As they marched forward they set fire to the parsonages and snug granges of every clergyman suspected of indulging in Laud's papistical tendencies, and coolly shot their own officers if they ventured to interfere. It is no marvel, then,

that when the Scotch army, led by Leslie and Montrose, came up with them at Newburn-on-the-Tyne, they made but a spiritless resistance, and took to flight with such hearty goodwill as never to pause until sheltered by the walls of York. Thus, at one blow, terminated what the English Puritans derisively called the "Bishops' War." In vain had Strafford, whose personal courage was undaunted, endeavoured to check his troopers in their headlong flight. In vain did he now attempt by bribes, promises, intimidations, remonstrances, to inspire them with other feelings. "His advances to the officers," says M. Guizot,* "were constrained, and ill-concealed his contempt and anger; his rigour irritated the soldiers without intimidating them. Petitions from several counties soon arrived, entreating the king to conclude a peace. Lords Wharton and Howard ventured to present one themselves; Strafford caused them to be arrested, convoked a court-martial, and demanded that they should be shot at the head of the army, as abettors of revolt. The court remained silent; at length Hamilton spoke: 'My lord,' said he to Strafford, 'when this sentence of yours is pronounced, are you sure of the soldiers?' Strafford, as if struck by a sudden revelation, turned away his head shudderingly, and made no reply. Yet his indomitable pride still upheld his hopes: 'Let the king but speak the word,' he wrote to Laud, 'and I will make the Scots go hence faster than they came; I would answer for it, on my life; but the instructions must come from another than me.' In fact, Charles already avoided him, afraid of the energy of his counsels." Strafford's master should either have been a bolder or a weaker prince; one who would

* "Histoire de la Révolution," p. 83.

have carried out all his able and iniquitous schemes, or would have feared to have compromised himself by participating in any of them.

It was now evident that money must be raised for the necessities of the state, but both Strafford and Charles shrank from facing a Parliament. The expedient, therefore, was tried of convening at York the old feudal assembly known as a Council of Peers, but it notably failed. Twelve of the proudest and most powerful of the nobles demanded that a Parliament should be legally summoned, and the demand was repeated by the citizens of London, in terms which neither the king nor his minister could affect to disregard.

Strafford was at this time in Ireland, administering the affairs of his lieutenancy, but was straightway recalled to London by the timid Charles. He arrived in town late on Monday, the 9th of November, six days after the meeting of the Parliament—that great national council so famous in the annals of English liberty as the "Long Parliament." Already, the leaders of the popular party in the House of Commons had determined on his downfall. When the "wicked earl" had first met Pym, his former confederate, after his shameless defection from the great cause, he observed, "You see I have left you." "So I perceive," was the stout Puritan's reply; "but we shall never leave *you* as long as you have a head on your shoulders." These were no idle words, and the menace was now to be fulfilled to the very letter.

It was on the 11th of November, 1640, that the great blow was struck, "with one stroke," says Milton, "winning again our lost liberties and charters, which our forefathers, after so many battles, could scarce

maintain." Anxious crowds had that morning assembled in the vicinity of St. Stephen's Hall, and throughout all London shot the electric feeling which tells that some mighty deed is about to be accomplished.

"The members are now all within the House, and upon the crowd outside a deep silence has fallen, such as anticipates great events. Hour passes after hour, yet the door of the Commons is still locked, and within may be heard, by such as stand in the adjoining lobby, not the confused and wrangling noise of a various debate, but the single continuous sound of one ominous voice, interrupted at intervals, not by a broken cheer, but by a tremendous shout of universal sympathy. Suddenly a stir is seen outside, the crowd grows light with uncovered heads, and the carriage of the great Lord-lieutenant of Ireland dashes up to the House of Lords.

"Ten minutes more have passed, the door of the Commons' House is abruptly thrown wide open, and forth issues Pym, followed by upwards of three hundred representatives of the English people, in that day the first men of the world in birth, in wealth, in talents. Their great leader crosses to the House of Lords, and the bar is in an instant filled with that immortal crowd.

"What, meanwhile, was the suspense lately endured by the meaner masses outside to the agitation which now heaved them to and fro like the sullen waves of an advancing storm. But the interval is happily shorter. It is closed by the appearance of Maxwell, the usher of the House of Lords, at whose side staggers Strafford himself, *a prisoner!* Statesmanship had achieved its master-stroke. The power of the greatest

and proudest minister that ever ruled a nation—of the only minister of genius that Charles I. possessed—lay grovelling in the dust beneath the feet of the meanest person in that assembled populace."*

In a contemporary account a letter from the old covenanter, Dr. Robert Baillie, then in London, to a certain Scotch presbytery, some interesting details are recorded. "The lieutenant of Ireland," writes rough old Baillie, "came but on Monday to town, late; on Tuesday rested, and on Wednesday came to Parliament, but ere night he was caged. Intolerable pride and oppression call to Heaven for vengeance! The Lower House closed their doors, the Speaker kept the keys till his accusation was concluded. Thereafter Mr. Pym went up with a number at his back to the higher House, and, in a pretty short speech, did, in the name of the Commons of all England, accuse Thomas Lord Strafford of high treason, and required his person to be arrested till probation might be made; so Mr. Pym and his pack were removed. The lords began to consult upon that strange and unpremeditated motion. The word goes in haste to the lord-lieutenant, where he was with the king. With speed he comes to the House of Peers and calls rudely at the doors, James Maxwell, keeper of the black rod, opens. His lordship, with a proud glooming countenance, makes towards his place at the board head, but at once many bid him void the house. So he is forced, in confusion, to go to the door till he is called. After consultation he stands but is told to kneel, and on his knees to hear the sentence. Being on his knees he is delivered to the black rod, to be prisoner till he is cleared of the crimes he is charged

* Forster's "Arrest of the Five Members."

with. He offered to speak, but was commanded to be gone without a word. In the outer room James Maxwell required of him, as prisoner, to deliver him his sword. When he had got it, with a loud voice he told his man to carry the lord-lieutenant's sword. This done he makes through a number of people towards his coach, all gazing, no man capping to him, before whom that morning the greatest in England would have stood uncovered, all crying, 'What is the matter?' He said, 'A small matter, I warrant you.' They replied, 'Yes, indeed, high treason is a small matter!'

"Coming to the place where he expected his coach it was not there, so he behoved to return the same way through a crowd of gazing people. When at last he had found his coach and was entering it, James Maxwell told him, 'My lord, you are my prisoner, and must go in my coach!' So he behoved to do so. For some days too many went to see him; but since the Parliament has commanded his keepers to be straiter. Pursuivants are despatched to Ireland to open all the ports, and to proclaim that all who had grievances might come over."

Pym's speech to the Commons, summing up all the misdeeds of the wicked earl, was a masterpiece of invective, though somewhat injured in tone by its allusions to Strafford's private failings. He eulogized in eloquent terms the statesman's genius, courage, and conduct, but pointed out that those qualities rendered him only the more dangerous as an enemy to the liberties of his country. He recapitulated all the arbitrary measures of which he had been the adviser, and the severities which had distinguished his administration of the presidency of the north and his sway in Ireland. Lord

Falkland insinuated that at least some time should be allowed to the Commons to examine the evidence laid before them. "The least delay," exclaimed Pym, "may lose everything. If the earl talk but once with the king, Parliament will be dissolved." And so the impeachment of Strafford was voted.

The earl's trial took place in Westminster Hall on the 22nd of March, 1641. A throne for the king, and a chair for the Prince of Wales, were placed at the upper end of the hall; and on each side were constructed temporary withdrawing-rooms, hung with tapestry. In one of these sat the king, the queen, and several court ladies, who throughout the trial were occupied in taking notes; and in the other were stationed several French nobles, at that time visiting the English court.

On seats beneath the throne, covered with green cloth, were seated the peers in their robes, contrasted by the scarlet gowns of the judges, who sat in their immediate neighbourhood. Lower down the hall the rows of seats were occupied by the Commons; and the whole spectacle daily presented, as Covenanter Baillie says, "the most glorious assembly the isle could afford." Across the centre of the hall ran a stout barrier covered with green cloth, which separated from his judges the unfortunate earl, his four secretaries, his guards, and Sir William Balfour, the Lieutenant of the Tower, who stood in close attendance upon him. Galleries on each side of the hall were thronged with curious and excited spectators.

Every day while his trial lasted Strafford was brought from the Tower by water, escorted by six barges, in which were one hundred soldiers. An equal number of the London train-bands received him on his disem-

barkation at Westminster, attended him to the hall, and remained on guard. When the august assembly was all prepared, and the prince in his robes seated beside the throne, the chamberlain and black rod ushered in the earl, who was always attired in a simple black velvet suit. On entering he made a low obeisance, advancing a few steps he made a second, when he came to his desk a third. Then at the bar, in front of his desk, he kneeled; and rising quickly saluted both sides of the house, and then sat down. To his obeisances but a few of the lords made any return.

Strafford's demeanour throughout this memorable trial was worthy of the man—nay, was worthy of a better man. "Never," says Whitelock, one of his astutest opponents, "never any man acted such a part, on such a theatre, with more wisdom, constancy, and eloquence, with greater reason, judgment, and temper, and with a better grace in all his words and actions, than did this great and excellent person; and he moved the hearts of all his auditors, some few excepted, to remorse and pity." With great skill he met the almost irresistible "logic of facts" brought to bear against him, and grappled with the arguments of his adversaries like a well-trained athlete. From Scotland, and Ireland, and England, came his accusers; he confronted them with unshrinking courage. Despite the vigour with which Pym and his coadjutors pressed home every charge, Strafford explained so much, qualified so much, so artfully coloured each questionable transaction, that public opinion began to turn in his favour. It was evident he had been guilty of cruelty, illegality, libertinage, violence; but neither of these, nor all of these together, amounted to high treason. Pym, Hampden,

and their friends began to feel that their own lives, no less than the freedom of the English people, trembled in the balance. At this crisis an entry was discovered in the notebook of Sir Harry Vane, the secretary of state, which turned the scale in their favour. At a council held on the 5th of May, in the preceding year, Strafford had incautiously hinted to the king, "You have an army in Ireland, that you might employ to reduce *this* kingdom to obedience." These words were the fate of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford.

The Commons still continued their impeachment before the House of Peers; but, afraid lest their enemy should escape them, introduced a Bill of Attainder against him in their own House, and carried it by a majority of four to one. To levy war against the king is high treason, ran their argument. To bring an army into England to reduce it to obedience is levying war against the king, for our law will not suppose that the king, "who can do no wrong," would wish to direct the force of arms against his own subjects. Strafford, therefore, was doubly a traitor; a traitor to his country and the throne.

Meanwhile Strafford rested secure in the belief that Charles would interpose to save him. In this belief he was encouraged by a private letter which the king addressed to him, and whose emphatic language the reader will not fail to note:—

"STRAFFORD,

"The misfortune that is fallen upon you, by the strange mistaking and conjunction of these times, is such that I must lay by the thought of employing you hereafter in my affairs; yet I cannot satisfy in honour

or conscience without assuring you now, in the midst of all our troubles, that, upon the word of a king, you shall not suffer in life, honour, or fortune. This is but justice, and therefore a very mean reward from a master to so faithful and able a servant, as you have shown yourself to be; yet it is as much, I conceive, as the present times will permit, though none shall hinder me from being

"Your constant and faithful friend,

"CHARLES R."*

He continued, therefore, his defence, despite his bodily ailments, with unabating spirit, and replied to his accusers in terms of the most pathetic eloquence. "My lords," said he, in conclusion, "I have now troubled your lordships a great deal longer than I should have done, were it not for the interest of these pledges that a saint in heaven has left me. I should be loth, my lords,—what I forfeit for myself is nothing,—but, I confess, that my indiscretion should forfeit for them, it wounds me very deeply. You will be pleased to pardon my infirmity. Something I should have said,"—he paused and wept—"but I see I shall not be able, and therefore I will leave it. And now, my lords, for myself I thank God I have been, by his good blessing towards me, taught that the afflictions of this present life are not to be compared with that eternal weight of glory that shall be revealed to us hereafter. And so, my lords, even so, with all humility and all tranquillity of mind, I do submit myself clearly and

* See the Strafford Letters. Consult also Whitelock's Memorials and Rushworth's Collections,—the latter for a very full account of the trial.

freely to your judgments, and whether that righteous judgment shall be to life or to death, *Te Deum laudamus, Te Deum confitemur!*"

The Bill of Attainder passed the House of Lords by a majority of twenty-six voices. In vain Charles himself had interfered; had summoned both Houses to his presence, and besought them to spare the earl, and promising that, in consideration of the misdemeanours he had undoubtedly committed, he should be dismissed from all his offices, and never again employed in the service of the Crown. The earl's opponents were too conscious of their own danger to yield to any such assurances.

Still the earl remained confident in the king's will and ability to save him. "Sweetheart," he wrote to his wife, "albeit all be done against me that art and malice can devise, with all the rigour possible, yet I am in great inward quietness, and in a strong belief God will deliver me out of all these troubles. . . . Your carriage, upon this occasion, I should advise to be calm, not seeming to be neglective of my trouble, and yet as there may appear no dejection in you. Continue in the family as formerly, and make much of your children. Tell Will, Nan, and Arabella I will write to them by the next. In the meantime I shall pray for them to God that He may bless them, and for their sakes deliver me out of the furious malice of my enemies, which yet, I trust, through the goodness of God, shall do me no hurt; God have us all in his blessed keeping."

But in the constancy of princes let no man put any trust. Charles suffered an agony of conscience, knowing that Strafford had done nothing in which he had not acquiesced, and that therefore he was bound to save the

life of so faithful and able a servant. One of the bishops, indeed, with mean equivocation, had told him that, as the man Charles Stuart, he ought to interfere for the protection of his friend and adviser, but that, as king, he was bound to do as the interests of his royalty demanded. But the honest and pious Juxon held nobler language. "If he knew that the earl was free from crime, it would be better to perish along with him than to shed one drop of innocent blood." While he was thus vacillating between his duty and his interests, he received a letter from Strafford, who had become aware of the king's position, enjoining him in noble, earnest terms to abandon him to his enemies, as the only means by which the peace of the realm could be secured. "Sir," he wrote, "my consent shall more acquit you to God than all the world can do besides. To a willing mind there is no injury done; and as, by God's grace, I forgive all the world, so I can give up the life of this world with all cheerfulness imaginable, in the just acknowledgment of your exceeding favour; and only beg that, in your goodness, you would vouchsafe to cast your gracious regard upon my poor son and his sisters, less or more, and so otherwise than their unfortunate father shall appear more or less worthy of his death. God long preserve your majesty."

It was a noble thing to offer such a self-sacrifice; it was a mean thing to accept of it. Charles, however, no longer resisted the pressure of the earl's enemies, and affixed his signature to the death-warrant, exclaiming, with bitter truth, "My Lord of Strafford's condition is more enviable than mine!"

When the fatal tidings were conveyed to the doomed minister, he could scarcely accredit them; but, on the

assurance of Secretary Carleton that the king had indeed given way to his enemies, he rose from his chair, and with eyes turned to heaven, with hands folded upon his heart, exclaimed, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the sons of men, for in them there is no salvation." From that moment he made ready to die with a constancy and courage which were as fully recognized by his opponents as his admirers.

Of the conduct of Charles in this painful crisis it seems to me there can be but one opinion, and that opinion has been expressed in vigorous language by Lord Macaulay. "There can be no doubt," he says, "that the treatment which Strafford received from his master was disgraceful. Faithless alike to his people and his tools, the king did not scruple to play the part of the cowardly approver, who hangs his accomplice. It is good that there should be such men as Charles in every league of villany; it is for such men that the offer of pardon and reward which appears after a murder is intended. They are indemnified, remunerated, and despised. The very magistrate who avails himself of their assistance looks on them as more contemptible than the criminal whom they betray. Was Strafford innocent? Was he a meritorious servant of the Crown? If so, what shall we think of the Prince who, having solemnly promised him that not a hair of his head should be hurt, and possessing an unquestioned constitutional right to save him, gave him up to the vengeance of his enemies? There were some points which we know Charles would not concede, and for which he was willing to risk the chances of civil war. Ought not a king who will make a stand for anything, to make a stand for the innocent blood? Was Strafford guilty? Even

on this supposition it is difficult not to feel disdain for the partner of his guilt, the tempter turned punisher. If, indeed, from that time forth the conduct of Charles had been blameless, it might have been said that his eyes were at last opened to the errors of his former conduct, and that in sacrificing to the wishes of his Parliament a minister whose crime had been a devotion too zealous to the interests of his prerogative, he gave a painful and deeply humiliating proof of the sincerity of repentance. His subsequent dealings with his people, however, clearly showed that it was not from any respect for the Constitution, or from any sense of the deep criminality of the plans in which Strafford and himself had been engaged, that he gave up his minister to the axe. It became evident that he had abandoned a servant who, deeply guilty as to all others, was guiltless to him alone, solely in order to gain time for maturing other schemes of tyranny and purchasing the aid of other Wentworths. He who would not avail himself of the power which the laws gave him to save an adherent to whom his honour was pledged, soon showed that he did not scruple to break every law and forfeit every pledge in order to work the ruin of his opponents." Bitter, however, was the retribution which fell upon Charles. Never again throughout his perilous reign was there so able a Man at the Helm as Wentworth, Earl of Strafford. Often must he have lamented that a genius so brilliant, an intrepidity so unquailing, had been lost to him and his cause by his own iniquitous weakness. The remembrance mingled with the agony of his last thoughts when he himself stood upon a scaffold, from which there was no escape. "God forbid," he said, "that I should be so ill a Christian as not to say that

God's judgments are just upon me. Many times He doth pay justice by an unjust sentence; that is, ordinary. I will only say this, that an unjust sentence that I suffered to take effect is punished by an unjust sentence upon me."

The execution of Strafford was fixed for the 12th of May. On that sad morning he rose early, attired himself with care, and refreshed himself moderately. The Lieutenant of the Tower, afraid lest the populace should overpower his escort and rend his prisoner limb by limb, besought him to make use of a coach. "No," replied the earl, "I dare look death in the face. Have you a care that I do not escape, and I care not how I die, whether by the hand of the executioner or the fury of the people." As he moved along the prison corridor, he passed the cell in which Archbishop Laud was confined, and kneeling down received the prelate's blessing. He was attended to the scaffold, on Tower Hill, by the Archbishop of Armagh, his brother, Sir George Wentworth, the Earl of Cleveland, and several close friends and intimate acquaintances. With unblenching brow and unfaltering steps he mounted the scaffold, and turning his back contemptuously upon the shouting mob, addressed a few last words to the friends around him. "Never," he said, "had he wilfully conspired against the welfare of the king or the nation." In the tenets of the Church of England he was a sincere believer, and he died a true son of that church. He bore enmity to no man, and freely forgave those who had persecuted him to the death.

Then, having shaken hands with his friends, he kneeled down for awhile with his chaplain, and remained in devout prayer. In about half an hour he arose, and calling his brother to his side, bade him carry

his love to his wife and sister, and to enjoin upon his son as his dying commands that he should continue faithful to the Church of England and to his king; should nourish no feeling of revenge against his father's enemies, and seek no higher office or distinction than equitably to administer the affairs of his own estate. "Carry my blessing also," he said, "to my daughters Anne and Arabella. Charge them to serve and fear God, and He will bless them; not forgetting my little infant, that knows neither good nor evil, and cannot speak for itself; God speak for it and bless it. I have well nigh done. One stroke more will make my wife husbandless, my dear children fatherless, my poor servants masterless, and separate me from my dear brothers and all my friends: but let God be to you and them all in all."

Strafford now removed his doublet. "I thank God," he said, "I am no more afraid of death; but as cheerfully put off my doublet at this time as ever I did when I went to bed." He then put on a white cap, pushing his hair underneath it with his own hands, and having summoned the headsman, freely extended to him his forgiveness. Kneeling down at the block, the Archbishop being on one side of him and his chaplain on the other, he placed his hands in the latter's, and prayed with all the fervour of a man on the dim threshold of another world. Having concluded, he laid his head upon the block, and stretching forth his hands—the appointed signal,—the executioner at one blow smote his head from his body, and Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, was no more!

The executioner held up the bleeding head in the eyes of the people, and exclaimed, "God save the king!"

"Thus," says Whitelock, "fell this noble earl, who for natural parts and abilities, and for improvement of knowledge by experience in the greatest affairs; for wisdom, faithfulness, and gallantry of mind, had left few behind him that can be ranked as his equals."

JOHN HAMPDEN.

(A.D. 1594—1643.)

"Almost every part of this virtuous and blameless life which is not hidden from us in modest privacy, is a precious and splendid portion of our national history."—LORD MACAULAY.

GREATEST and purest of the statesmen of the Commonwealth, was JOHN HAMPDEN, born in London in the year 1594, the son of a Buckinghamshire esquire of moderate estate and ancient lineage.

The Hampdens originally settled in Buckinghamshire in the days of Edward the Confessor, and through all the vicissitudes of the arduous struggle between Saxons and Normans they contrived to retain their patrimonial inheritance. They swore allegiance to the Red Rose during the long contest between the Houses of York and Lancaster, but preserved their dignity unimpaired; and being highly favoured by the Tudor sovereigns, maintained a very splendid and satisfactory state in their Buckinghamshire home. Griffith Hampden received there with suitable pomp the progress-loving Elizabeth. His son, William Hampden, a member of the queen's Parliament called in 1593, married Elizabeth Cromwell—a sister of Richard Cromwell, father of the great Lord Protector—and their eldest son was John Hampden, the patriot statesman of the Commonwealth.

The child was but three years old when his father

died, leaving him heir to "a very large estate." He was sent as a scholar to the Grammar School of Thame, where he early distinguished himself by his studious habits and eager love of knowledge. Thence he was removed at the age of fifteen to Magdalen College, Oxford, and in its "academic shades" passed several years of laborious study and lettered seclusion. So highly was his scholarship esteemed, that he was selected to write the elaborate Latin eulogiums with which the Oxford University thought fit to hail the marriage of James I.'s daughter, Elizabeth, to the unfortunate Elector Palatine of Bohemia.

He was nineteen years of age when, in 1613, he entered himself as a student of law in the Inner Temple. So early an introduction to the pleasures of the metropolis was not without its deteriorating effect upon Hampden's mind; and Clarendon tells us that, at this period, the future patriot "indulged himself in all the licence in sports, and exercises, and company, which were used by men of the most jolly conversation." But a true and honourable love speedily rescued him from pleasures that might have degenerated into excesses. An early marriage for him, as for his kinsman Cromwell, proved the threshold of a new life—the stepping-stone to a great career. The lady he wedded (in 1619) was a woman of many personal charms, and fitted by nurture and natural disposition to be the worthy helpmate of a patriotic man. She was Elizabeth, the daughter of Edmund Simeon, of Pyrton, in Oxfordshire. In the following year he entered public life as member of parliament for the borough of Grampound in Cornwall, although he did not take his seat in the House until June 1621.

That it is possible to cultivate the active exercise of religion without yielding to a churlish asceticism; that a man may be a "Puritan" and yet not a bigot; that true religious feeling is by no means inseparable from cheerfulness of spirit and courtesy of manner, John Hampden during all his later life exemplified. Wordsworth has sketched with a skilful hand the characteristics of the Happy Warrior. Hampden might have furnished him with the companion model of the Happy Statesman:—

"Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state;
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which heaven has join'd
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a lover, and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired."

A brightness, however, was about all his daily life. In the leafy lanes and ample meadows of Buckinghamshire, he illustrated to his neighbours the best and noblest qualities of an English gentleman; he preserved, as his opponent Clarendon acknowledges, "his own natural cheerfulness and vivacity, and, above all, a glowing courtesy to all men;" while in every domestic relation he was governed by truthful love, scrupulous

honour, and reverent devotion to the great laws of duty. His mother was anxious that the rich commoner should be ennobled, but with James I. titles and dignities were things for money-barter, and Hampden would not stoop to purchase a peerage by a bribe to the king or his favourites. In fact, the philosophic mind of the future statesman had already presaged the approaching struggle between the despotism of the court and the independence of the people, between an arbitrary king and a free parliament; and it was only on the side of the latter that such a man as Hampden could array himself. So he looked out afar on the coming storm, and silently made ready to meet it, exerting himself to secure the privileges of parliamentary representation for certain independent boroughs, which the court party were anxious to silence. For one of these boroughs, Wendover, he took his seat in 1625, in the first Parliament of Charles I.

Under the Tudors the prerogatives of the sovereign had developed to such alarming proportions as completely to override the laws of the realm and menace the rights and liberties of the people; and it was felt then, as at a later period, that, to use the well-known words of Dunning, "the power of the Crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished." Simple means, both of offence and defence, were possessed by the representatives of the people; they enjoyed the command of the national "purse," and could check a monarch in his arbitrary career by withholding or diminishing the supplies. During the reign of Elizabeth, despot as she was and thorough Tudor, Crown and Commons seldom came into direct collision. Her sagacity taught her when to yield and how to yield—

anticipating the designs of Parliament with a tact and dexterity which increased her power while she seemed to abandon it. But James I. was a sovereign of a different stamp. His opinion of his skill in "kingcraft" was ridiculously exaggerated; his overweening attachment to the doctrine of "divine right," was a monomania rather than the result of intelligent conviction. He was perpetually quarrelling with his Parliament, and as constantly retreating from the issues he himself had raised. Like Mrs. Partington, he trundled his mop in impotent attempts to check the advance of the fast-gathering waters which menaced the very foundations of the state.

In his third Parliament (A.D. 1621)—the first in which Hampden appeared—the growing discontent of the people found indignant and emphatic voice, and, as Lord Nugent observes,* a parliamentary opposition first sprang into existence. Many of the most infamous tools of the court and oppressors of the nation were stripped of their illegal plunder; and James, perceiving that he could not subdue his bold opponents by argument, availed himself of the usual resource of kingly logicians, and imprisoned them.

On the 27th of March, 1625, James I. died, bequeathing to his successor the terrible legacy of a civil commotion and a foreign war. Had that successor possessed the genius of an Elizabeth, it is probable that the dynasty might have remained intact, and the fields of Marston Moor and Naseby have never been foughten. Elizabeth not only conceded, but she knew what to concede and when to concede; Charles I. resisted, until

* "Memorials of Hampden," vol. i. See also Macaulay, vol. i. of the History; and his "Essay on Hampden."

the nation was no longer willing to accept concessions, nor to reverence him who made them.

In the very first Parliament summoned by the unfortunate Charles the struggle commenced (June 1625). The king required supplies to carry on the Spanish war; the Commons asked for "redress of grievances." In a tempest of rage the king dissolved them, and endeavoured to satisfy his needs by issuing money-letters under the Privy Seal. The resource was soon discovered to be an indifferent one, and in 1626, Charles summoned another Parliament. Seven of the ablest of the popular leaders were prevented from attendance by an ingenious expedient: the king nominated them sheriffs for the year. But the *vox populi* was by no means silenced. In vain the monarch told the Commons that they lived but by his will; that he could summon or dismiss them at his pleasure; that neither with his favourites nor his policy had they any right to interfere. They persisted in their complaints—they passed under review all the ill-advised measures of the court, and finally, rising in courage and resolution, impeached the king's arch-councillor, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. Charles imprisoned the leaders of the impeachment, Sir Dudley Digges and Sir John Eliot, but was constrained by the remonstrances of the Commons to release them, and after an undignified exhibition of alternate obstinacy and vacillation, peremptorily dissolved his second Parliament.

He could reign without Houses of Lords and Commons, it is true, but he could not reign without money, and recourse, therefore, was had to the old expedient of the Plantagenets—forced loans under the appellation of "benevolences." The common people who protested

against these exactions were forcibly impressed into the then horrible servitude of the army or navy; men of higher grade were flung into prison. Hampden, at this great crisis, gave evidence of the firm and resolute spirit which was, in the fulness of time, to accomplish so much for England's liberties. He refused to pay the amount at which his share of "the loan" was estimated. "I would be content," he said, "to lend as well as others, but I fear to draw upon myself that curse in Magna Charta which should be read twice a year against those who infringe it." His reference to the great Charter was probably even more displeasing than his stout resistance to the forced loan, and he was consigned a prisoner to the Gate-house, from whence, as he remained constant in his refusal, he was removed to Hurst Castle in Hampshire. But the necessities of the king increased. Levies, imposts, loans, yielded no satisfactory supplies, and it became expedient to summon another Parliament. As a preliminary step, and in the hope of securing some slight popularity, the king released his prisoners, and Hampden was restored to the quiet Buckinghamshire home and the sweet social life in which he so much delighted. He was immediately re-elected for Wendover, and took his seat in Charles's third Parliament, which met early in 1628.

It was in the first session of this Parliament that the king was constrained to assent to the memorable "Petition of Right"—the second Magna Charta of England—purchased from his reluctant hands by five ample subsidies. This famous instrument provided that, henceforth, forced loans or benevolences should be illegal; that imprisonment, or any other punishment, could only follow upon the just verdict of a man's

peers; and that the billeting of soldiers on private families as a penalty for not lending money on the king's writ should be stringently prohibited. These, it is true, were but the renewals of conditions granted by King John to the barons at Runnymede; but Charles felt that the Commons had gained a complete victory over him, and to prevent further encroachment on his beloved "prerogative," prorogued Parliament. It met again in January, 1629. But in the interval, Buckingham had fallen in his audience-chamber at Portsmouth, a victim to Felton's dagger, and Charles faced his subjects without any confidential adviser at his elbow. It was soon perceived, however, that he had in no wise modified his policy. He had learned nothing—not even the wisdom of keeping his royal word. "Tonnage and poundage" were still exacted without parliamentary sanction, and the Petition of Right was already as worthless as the parchment whereon its stipulations were inscribed.

In language animated, but condensed, Lord Macaulay has sketched the events of the ensuing session:— "The Commons," he says, "met in no complying humour. They took into their most serious consideration the measures of the government concerning tonnage and poundage. They summoned the officers of the custom-house to their bar. They interrogated the barons of the exchequer. They committed one of the sheriffs of London. Sir John Eliot, a distinguished member of the Opposition, and an intimate friend of Hampden, proposed a resolution condemning the unconstitutional imposition. The Speaker said that the king had commanded him to put no such question to the vote. This decision produced the most violent burst of feeling ever

seen within the walls of Parliament. Hayman remonstrated vehemently against the disgraceful language which had been heard from the chair. Eliot dashed the paper which contained his resolution on the floor of the House. Valentine and Hollis held the Speaker down in his seat by main force, and read the motion amidst the loudest shouts. The door was locked, and the key laid on the table. The usher of the Black Rod knocked for admittance in vain. After passing several bitterly-worded resolutions, the House adjourned. It was not suffered to meet again. The king dissolved it, and committed to the Tower the leading actors in the 'Great Protestation'—Eliot (who died in captivity), the learned Selden, Denzil Hollis, Stroud, and others."

Of these events Hampden had been a keen observer; in some of them an active participator. He had acted on several committees of importance, and devoted many laborious hours to the study of the laws and privileges of Parliament. Now that the Legislature was dissolved he went back to the leafy solitudes and the quaint Tudor house of Great Hampden, to enjoy the simple pleasures of a rural life, and to muse, not unobservant of passing events, on the past and future of free, fair England. Hampden's house, though sadly altered, still occupies its ancient site. It crowns the crest of a gently rising ground, in the shadow of green woods and dim blue hills. Long columnar avenues pierce the deep masses of beech that surround it. Oak-crowned knolls rise up at intervals to diversify its pleasant park. One stately aisle of venerable trees is known as the "Queen's Gap," having been opened up by Hampden's grandfather for the approach of the regal Elizabeth.

The bloom of flowers and the brightness of greensward are not wanting to the pleasures of this veritable English home, and in close vicinity stands the gray old tower of the village church.

Here, then, for eleven years, the patriot remained in seclusion, occupying himself in those field sports to which English gentlemen have been always so warmly attached—in the careful discharge of his duties as "squire" and "magistrate"—in intimate correspondence with his friends—in the study of grave books, and especially of Davila's "History of the Civil Wars of France." Here were born most of his children, nine in all, and here, alas! he lost his amiable and accomplished wife, in the summer of 1634. His "perpetual testimony of conjugal love" may still be read in the epitaph he inscribed upon the monument erected to her memory in Great Hampden Church. She was, he says—

> "The staie and comfort of her neighbours,
> The love and glory of a well-ordered familie,
> The delight and happiness of tender parents,
> But a crowne of blessings to a husband,
> In a wife, to all an eternall paterne of goodness
> And cause of joye whilst shee was in her dissolution."

Meanwhile, the storm-clouds had gathered rapidly, fatally, over misruled and betrayed England. Religious hatred lent additional fierceness to the fires of political animosity, and while the most arbitrary exactions were pressed upon the people by Charles and his able adviser, Strafford, his other coadjutor, the weak and miserable Laud, caused the Puritans to be imprisoned, or whipped, pilloried, or branded, with a ferocity which Alva

himself had scarcely exceeded in his treatment of the unhappy Netherlands.

At length, the king and his advisers had nearly exhausted the arsenal of arbitrary power. There remained but one other means by which money could be raised without the aid of Parliament—a scheme of exaction devised by Attorney-General Noy* and Chief-Justice Finch. The need was urgent. Strafford's system of "Thorough," as we have shown in a preceding biography, could only be enforced by means of a standing army, and a standing army could only be maintained by a revenue independent of parliamentary control.

The design propounded to Charles was worthy of the mean spirits who conceived it, of the weak but arbitrary monarch who accepted it, of the infamous objects it was intended to subserve.

In the days of the Plantagenets, when there existed no regular national revenue, the English kings had been

* Noy died before the famous writ was issued, a very mixed renown following him. "The Vintners," says Wood, "illuminated at his death, made bonfires, and 'drank lusty carouses:' to them, as to every man, he had been a sore affliction. His heart, on dissection, adds old Anthony, was found 'all shrivelled up like a leather penny-purse;' which gave rise to comments among the Puritans. His brain, said the pasquinades of the day, was found reduced to a mass of dust, his heart was a bundle of old sheepskin writs, and his belly consisted of a barrel of soap. Some indistinct memory of him still survives, as of a grisly Law Pluto, and dark Law Monster, kind of Infernal King, Chief Enchanter in the Domdaniel of Attorneys; one of those frightful men, who, as his contemporaries passionately said and repeated, dare to 'decree injustice *by a law*.'"—CARLYLE, *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*.

accustomed to call on the maritime counties to provide ships for the defence of the coast. When ships could not be furnished a quota of money was accepted. But "ship-money," as it was called, had never, even by our most absolute sovereigns, been levied in time of peace, nor even in the deadly throes of our most desperate wars had the inland shires been called upon to contribute it. For a long period, indeed, it had not been exacted at all. But Charles and his advisers now determined to revive the antiquated practice, in a period of profound tranquillity, and to extend it to all England, with the view of providing—not for vessels of war for the protection of the English coast, but for the maintenance of an army of mercenaries to crush under foot the last sparks of England's freedom. It was to furnish, as Clarendon says, "a spring and magazine that should have no bottom, and an everlasting supply of all occasions."

Throughout the length and breadth of England the heart of the people was now astir (A.D. 1635-6). But yet, so deep is the reverence of Englishmen for the throne, so inert are they in opposing even the semblance of monarchical law, that at first it seemed probable the exaction would be submitted to without active resistance. Happily, in every great crisis there arises the man fitted to contend with it. That man was now to be found in a grave and secluded Buckinghamshire squire.

It was on the 11th of January, 1636, that Peter Alridge and Thomas Lane, assessors of ship-money, had assembled a parochial meeting, in the vestry of the church of Great Kimble, to assess the ship-money of the said parish. And it was then and there that the

parishioners of Great Kimble, some thirty-five in number, duly attended,—among them John Hampden, lord of the manor of Great Hampden,—and duly signed a bold protest against the assessment, led by John Hampden, who, to the astonishment of assessors and parish constables, flatly refused to pay his quota, £1 11*s.* 6*d.* This, and a sum of 20*s.* for lands in another parish, was his share of the assessment of the county (a ship of 450 tons, or a sum of £4500). But Hampden had gathered the opinions of the most eminent (and independent) lawyers of the country to strengthen the conviction which his own studies had produced, and firm in his opposition to the tyranny of king and court, stoutly refused to recognize the legality of the writ of ship-money.

Immediately he became a man of mark. The very soul of England was aroused to sympathy with his intrepidity. Hitherto he had been, as Clarendon says, rather of reputation in his own county, than of "public discourse or fame in the kingdom;" but now "he grew the argument of all tongues, every man inquiring who and what he was that durst, at his own charge, support the liberty and property of the kingdom, and rescue his country, as he thought, from being made a prey to the court." And yet his natural greatness was not affected by this sudden fame. "His carriage throughout this agitation," as his ablest opponent acknowledges, "was with that rare temper and modesty that they who watched him narrowly to find some advantage against his person, to make him less resolute in his cause, were compelled to give him a just testimony."

In the autumn of 1636 came on this famous trial.

The twelve judges who occupied the bench were, it must be remembered, either the immediate creatures of the court, or had purchased their dignities with bribes. At the royal pleasure they could be removed, and to the royal pleasure they were accordingly devoted. Before this packed judgment-seat the cause of the Crown was pleaded by the attorney-general and solicitor-general. Hampden was defended by the famous Oliver St. John, "a man whose temper was melancholy, whose manners were reserved, and who was as yet little known in Westminster Hall, but whose great talents had not escaped the penetrating eye of Hampden."

Notwithstanding the potent influence which frowned upon Hampden and his counsel, their defeat was equal to a victory. Five of the twelve judges pronounced in his favour, and the court party carried their cause by the small majority of two voices. "The judgment that was given against him," says Clarendon, "infinitely more advanced him than the service for which it was given." He stood forward the foremost man in England of the independent party. Instinctive reliance was placed by the great majority of his countrymen on his courage, patriotism, and truth. The great movement against the tyranny of the Crown wanted a leader, and not in Pym, or Vane, or Hollis—able and resolute as they were—but in John Hampden, was found that leader, and to him above all the other statesmen of the Commonwealth does England owe her rights and liberties.

Strafford alone, perhaps, of the royal faction felt the full force of the blow dealt at the absolutism of the Crown by its pseudo victory over Hampden. Like all renegades, his hostility to the popular party was of

surpassing bitterness. Against the Buckinghamshire rebel he actually raved. "In good faith," he wrote to Laud, a kindred but far less able spirit, "were such men rightly served, they should be whipped into their right wits." "If the rod be so used that it smart not, I am the more sorry." Open war was declared between the court and the patriot. Hampden felt that the whole power of the Crown would soon be brought to bear upon his destruction, and sick of heart at public and private wrongs, he resolved to abandon his native country and seek a new home on the virgin shores of the Atlantic. There already a small Puritan community was established, the original of the vast confederation which has since received so wonderful a development, and is now unhappily convulsed by the throes of an intestine war. Its members were prepared to welcome Hampden with open arms, and thither, therefore, he determined to betake himself, in company with one rough, stalwart, rugged man, his kinsman, whose great powers were then unknown to himself, and unsuspected by others, but in whom Hampden placed no ordinary confidence. This was the future victor at Marston Moor and Naseby, Oliver Cromwell.

The cousins had both shipped themselves on board a vessel lying in the Thames, and bound for America, in company with seven other ships of emigrants, when an Order in Council suddenly appeared prohibiting them from sailing. Little could king or councillors imagine how terrible a retribution this arbitrary act would bring upon them! Had those vessels sailed, widely different might have been the course of events. Naseby, I fancy, would never have been fought. Charles's head might never have fallen on the bloody

The cousins, John Hampden and Oliver Cromwell, had both shipped themselves on board a vessel bound for America, when an Order in Council prohibited them from sailing.—p. 48.

scaffold at Whitehall, and the liberties and rights of Englishmen must have trembled in the balance for many a weary year. A civil war, it is true, could hardly have been prevented; but without a Cromwell to direct the shock of battle, who can say that a successful result might not have been deferred for long years of war and bloodshed!

It was at this epoch that Scotland broke out into open revolt. Urged on by Laud, and prompted also by his own narrow views of religion, Charles determined upon forcing upon the Scotch Church the rites and ceremonials of the Anglican establishment, rites and ceremonials which the stern followers of Knox regarded with only less detestation than those of Rome. A burning spirit of opposition was instantly aroused. Peers, priests, people, formed themselves into the famous confederacy of the Holy League and Covenant. The Anglican bishops, Charles's nominees, were forced to withdraw across the border. A general assembly of the Kirk was summoned, and there a vehement resolution was passed against episcopacy. "No bishops! no mass books!" was the cry, "rather let us arm as our fathers did, and resist even to the death."

It was resolved to reduce rebellious Scotland by the sword. An army advanced to the border; a fleet sailed into the Firth of Forth. Early in 1639 Charles placed himself at the head of his forces, but, as was his wont, hesitated at the wrong moment, and after "a feeble campaign," withdrew from Scotland in ignominy. A treaty was patched up, which both parties made haste to break. In vain the king's commissioners attempted to dissolve the Scotch Parliament. The attempt only increased the indignation of the people,

and the cry of "No bishops!" rang as loudly as before in every mountain glen and lowland valley.

Again, therefore, Charles resolved on war. Laud and Strafford, his chief counsellors, were by no means dismayed by the shadows of coming events. They believed themselves able to control and subdue the storm they had invoked. Strafford's policy was now as ever "thorough!" Nevertheless, war cannot be made without armies, and armies cannot be maintained without money. From what sources should supplies be procured? The royal treasury was empty; no further exactions could be attempted. There was but one resource—a resource to which Charles most unwillingly betook himself. After eleven years of uncontrolled power, he must call a Parliament, and once more be compelled to listen to the voice of the nation.

The Parliament assembled in 1640, and the king, says Macaulay, had another chance of conciliating his people. The new House of Commons was, beyond all comparison, the least refractory House of Commons that had been known for many years. "The House," says Clarendon, "was exceedingly disposed to please the king, and to do him service. It could never be hoped that more sober or dispassionate men would ever meet together in that place, or fewer who brought ill purposes with them."

Hampden, in this Parliament, took his seat as member for Buckinghamshire. He was now married a second time to the daughter of a respectable squire, Letitia Vachel, and removing to London to lodgings near the house occupied by Pym in Gray's Inn Lane, henceforth devoted himself to his country, no more returning to the old ancestral home which stood in the

silent shadow of the wooded Chiltern hills. Unwilling again to interrupt our brief sketch of the public life of the great Puritan statesman, let us here record that his later domestic life was clouded by many sorrows, by the deaths of his eldest son and well-loved daughter, Mrs. Knightly. For such a man, however, the woes of the domestic hearth faded into nothingness before the sufferings of the country which he prized so dearly, for whose liberties he lived, and wrought, and died.

The king's speech to his Parliament was an invective against the Scotch insurgents, and a demand for troops, arms, and money that they might summarily be punished. To arouse the patriotism of the Commons he read an intercepted letter from the Lords of the Covenant to the French king, supplicating his aid in their defence of their civil and religious liberty. But the Commons had no special feelings of indignation against the Scots, while they had very sincere opinions relative to the arbitrary actions of Charles and his advisers. The old story was retold. The king asked for money, the nation for "redress of grievances." Charles demanded twelve subsidies, to be paid in three years, and offered, if these were granted, to abandon the prerogative of levying ship-money without the consent of Parliament. But he had before promised, on similar conditions, to maintain the provisions of the Petition of Right. In that case he had broken his royal word; what security was there that he would better observe his present promises? Moreover, the Commons utterly denied the legality of the writs under which Hampden and others had suffered, while it was plain that by acceding to the king's proposal, they would indeed acknowledge the existence of the Crown's prerogative.

This strong point was ably seized upon by Hampden, who moved that the question should be put, "Whether the House would consent to the proposition made by the king, as contained in the message?" Hyde, afterwards Earl of Clarendon, proposed that the sense of the House should be taken in a different manner. "Let us," said he, "at first determine whether we will, or will not, grant a supply, and afterwards resolve in what manner and to what amount." The majority of the House was undoubtedly disposed to grant a subsidy, and Hyde's motion would have been passed, but Sir Harry Vane, the Secretary of State, rose in the turmoil and declared that unless the House granted all the king's demands, the king would accept of none. In anger and consternation the Commons disputed no longer on Hyde's or Hampden's motions, but adjourned to the following day. On the following day they were suddenly summoned to the House of Lords, and peremptorily dissolved. Thus ended the three weeks' Parliament, and thus Charles once more proclaimed himself independent of the laws and privileges of his people.

An hour after the dissolution, says M. Guizot, "Hyde met Oliver St. John, the friend of Hampden, and one of the leaders of the opposition, which was already formed into a party. Hyde was dispirited; St. John, on the contrary, though of a naturally sombre countenance, and who was never seen to smile, had now a joyous look and beaming eyes. 'What disturbs you?' said he to Hyde. 'That which disturbs many honest men,' answered Hyde; 'the imprudent dissolution of so sensible and moderate a Parliament, which, in our present disorders, was the only one likely to

apply a remedy.' 'Ah well,' said St. John, 'before things get better they must get still worse: this Parliament would not have done what must be done.'"*

Charles having made one hasty step was not likely to hesitate in the path of wrong-doing. He threw some of the leading members of the late Parliament into prison; he recommenced the levy of ship-money, and prosecuted the mayor and sheriffs of London because they displayed too much lenity in exacting it. To every possible method of procuring supplies, Charles, with Strafford and Laud for his councillors, resorted, and at length succeeded in getting together an army for the subjugation of Scotland. He led it to the northern borders, but only to find disaffection in its ranks. His soldiers had no special longing for what they called the "Bishops' War," and stout yeomen though they were, just fresh from their farms and meadows, their barns and kine, were ill-adapted to oppose the stalwart pikemen and musqueteers of the Covenanters, who had served under Gustavus Adolphus, and were led by the veteran Leslie. At Newburn-on-the-Tyne the royalists suffered a severe repulse, and incontinently commenced a retreat which only terminated under the walls of York. From that moment Strafford himself was conquered, and the beginning of the end was come.

The king had fallen into an utter despondency Daily he received some new evidence of his weakness. Money was wanting, and the old sources of supply were exhausted. The soldiers deserted in troops; the people everywhere received the advancing Scots with cries of welcome. Meanwhile, the Scots themselves professed

* Guizot's "History of the English Revolution."

no disloyal or rebellious intentions, but they asked for £40,000 a month to defray their extraordinary expenses. The nation would not rise against them, and the citizens of London refused all further loans of money unless a treaty was concluded, peace proclaimed, and a new Parliament summoned. After a bitter pause of useless hesitation, the king yielded, and a Parliament was accordingly convoked.

This memorable council, so gloriously known in English history as the Long Parliament, met at Westminster on the 3rd of November, 1640. There on its benches were seated the leaders of the people of England—Oliver St. John, Denzil Hollis, Haselrig, Fiennes, and Cromwell. There, too, were seated the chiefs of a more moderate party, Hyde, and Falkland, and Digby—men who had not yet abandoned all faith in Charles, or hope of constitutional reform. But pre-eminent in the ranks of this new and weighty assembly were John Pym and John Hampden, and first of these was undoubtedly John Hampden, the grave, quiet country squire, and member for Buckinghamshire. "The eyes of all men," says Clarendon, "were fixed upon him, as their *patriæ pater*, and the pilot that must steer the vessel through the tempests and rocks which threatened it. And I am persuaded," he adds, "that his power and interest at that time were greater to do good or hurt than any man's in the kingdom, or than any man of his rank hath had in any time; for his reputation of honesty was universal, and his affections seemed so publicly guided, that no corrupt or private ends could bias them." Nor is his influence to be wondered at. He was endowed with rare powers of statesmanship; was gifted with a happy eloquence, a

clear judgment, and an impassible temper. Lord Clarendon, his great rival, does ample justice to his great faculties. "He was of that rare affability and temper in debate, and of that seeming humility and submission of judgment, as if he brought no opinion with him, but a desire of information and instruction; yet he had so subtle a way of interrogating, and, under the notion of doubts, insinuating his objections, that he left his opinions with those from whom he pretended to learn and receive them. And even with them who were able to preserve themselves from his infusions, and discerned those opinions to be fixed in him with which they could not comply, he always left the character of an ingenious and conscientious person. He was, indeed, a very wise man, and of great parts, and possessed with the most absolute spirit of popularity, that is, the most absolute faculties to govern the people, of any man I ever knew. For the first year of the Parliament, he seemed rather to moderate and soften the violent and distempered humours than to inflame them. But wise and dispassioned men [such as my Lord Clarendon?] plainly discerned that that moderation proceeded from prudence and observation that the season was not ripe, and rather than that he approved of the moderation; and that he begat many opinions and notions, the education whereof he committed to other men; so far disguising his own designs that he seemed seldom to wish more than was concluded; and in many gross conclusions, which would hereafter contribute to designs not yet set on foot, when he found them sufficiently backed by majority of voices, he would withdraw himself before the question, that he might seem not to consent to so much visible unreasonable-

ness; which produced as great a doubt in some as it did approbation in others of his integrity."*

The great deeds achieved by the Long Parliament in the first year of its history, have already been commemorated in the preceding biography. The impeachment and execution of Strafford; the imprisonment of Laud; the reversal of the sentences inflicted by the iniquitous Star Chamber upon its unhappy victims; the reformation of the Stannary and Forest courts; the abolition of the Star Chamber and other arbitrary jurisdictions; the destruction in fact of all the weapons of despotism forged by the minions of tyrants in the old days of darkness; these were among the achievements of Hampden, and those whom Hampden led. Satisfied with its labours the Parliament for awhile disposed itself to rest. During the interval Charles recommenced his intrigues. As he had before seduced Finch and Strafford from the popular side, why should he not now be as successful in beguiling Pym and Hampden? He professed, therefore, his intention of confiding to the Earl of Bedford the formation of a ministry on "popular principles," in which Hollis was to figure as secretary of state, Oliver St. John as solicitor-general, and Pym as chancellor of the exchequer. Hampden, whose virtues the king himself acknowledged, was to be appointed tutor to the Prince of Wales. How far the court party were sincere in their overtures, it is needless to discuss, for a premature termination was put to the whole scheme by the Earl of Bedford's sudden death.

During the recess Hampden was despatched to

* Clarendon's "History of the Rebellion" (Oxford edition), p. 356, etc.

Scotland by the House of Commons as a commissioner, it was given out, to obtain security for a debt contracted by the Scots during the late invasion;* but his real duties were to watch the negotiations commenced between Charles I., who was now at Edinburgh, and the chiefs of the Covenant, and to see that no injury was covertly inflicted upon the popular cause. With jewels, titles, dignities, and church lands, the king was rapidly securing the affections of the needy Scots, and Hampden's mission might have proved a fruitless one but for a sudden and unforeseen event which was scarcely less than a deathblow to the royal party. This was the revolt of the Irish Catholics, who, professing to bear the king's commission, swept through Ireland with fire and sword, plundering the homes of all who were attached to England and Protestantism. In calmer times an English sovereign would not be suspected of complicity in such transactions; but men's distrust was now aroused, and the keen ears of suspicion eagerly caught up the rumours which calumnious tongues had circulated. It was known that the queen was a Papist, and that the king and Archbishop Laud were favourably inclined to many ceremonies and doctrines which the Puritans deemed the offspring of the Church of Rome. So that it was believed by thousands that the Irish rebellion had been instigated, or, at least, connived at, by the court. "It was soon whispered," says Macaulay, "that the rebellion of the Roman Catholics of Ulster was part of a vast work of darkness which had been planned at Whitehall."

In the second session, therefore, of the Long Parliament, which commenced in October, 1641, it was plainly

* Nugent's "Memorials of Hampden."

to be perceived that two strongly opposed parties had arisen. The Puritans, embittered against the court by a thousand sufferings, had now massed themselves together in a formidable phalanx, nicknamed the Roundheads. Their strength lay among "the small freeholders in the country, and among the merchants and shopkeepers of the towns,"—the Protestant Nonconformists, and the Calvinistic members of the Established Church. The "Cavaliers," as they were called, formed, at first, a scarcely less imposing body. Notwithstanding the Irish revolt, the royalist party in Parliament had increased in numbers. Many thought that reform had been carried far enough, or, at least, that what more was wanted might be waited for with patience, and received from the Crown as a gift. The Roman Catholics had everything to fear from the ascendancy of the Puritans, and everything to hope from the success of the court. The universities, the bishops, the great body of the clergymen, most of the nobility, and the more opulent landholders were naturally attached to the Crown, the fountain of their honour and dignity. Thus it happened, then, that on the meeting of Parliament in November, the two parties were found to be more nearly balanced than Hampden and his friends had anticipated.

The first great struggle between these opposing bodies took place on the 21st of November, 1641, when the opposition moved that a grand petition and remonstrance should be presented to the king, reciting the various grievances which the nation had undergone since his accession, setting forth with terrible distinctness the grounds on which his subjects distrusted his royal words, and demanding some tangible security for better government in the future. The measure was fiercely

debated. Those who had inveighed so loudly—Falkland, Hyde, and Colepepper—in the former session, against the abuses of the court, were now as loud in its defence. They had been caught in Charles's gilded nets. From nine in the morning until long after midnight the hot contention endured. "At three of the clock in the morning, when they voted it," says Sir Philip Warwick, a Royalist member, "I thought we had all sat in the valley of the shadow of death; for we, like Joab's and Abner's young men, had catched at each others' locks, and sheathed our swords in each other's bowels, had not the sagacity and great calmness of Mr. Hampden, by a short speech, prevented it, and led us to defer our angry debate until the next morning." The great remonstrance was finally carried by a majority of eleven votes only.

On the 25th of November Charles I. returned to London, and the result of the debate on the remonstrance exhibiting to him the strength of his party in the Commons, he resolved upon crushing his opponents at once and for ever. After several minor measures of arbitrary power, he resolved upon an action which success alone could justify, and while loudly professing his intention to abide by the advice of moderate-minded councillors, unknown to them, and at the eagerly-repeated instigation of his "evil genius," Henrietta Maria, ordered the attorney-general to impeach Hampden, Pym, Hollis, Haslerig, and Stroud at the bar of the House of Lords, of high treason. A special message was thereupon transmitted to the Commons, who, alarmed and indignant, simply promised to take it into consideration. The king next sent an officer to place the royal seal on the lodgings, papers, and trunks of the accused

members. The Commons recovering their courage, sent a messenger to break the seals, and refused to give up the victims whom Charles demanded. Having gone so far, Charles could scarcely refuse to go yet farther. And Henrietta did not fail to encourage him. Herself afraid of impeachment at the hands of the popular leaders, she cried to the king, "Go, you coward, and pull those rogues out by the ears, or never see me more." He resolved upon a fatal step. The Commons would not surrender the culprits; he would go and seize them.

This memorable scene took place on the 4th of January, 1642. Information of the king's design had already been conveyed to Pym by (it is said) the Countess of Carlisle, and while Charles was on his way to Whitehall with an armed band, the five members withdrew from the House, and getting into a boat at the river side, effected their escape. Within the House, the Speaker sat in his seat, with his mace still lying before him, while Cromwell, and men like Cromwell, pulled their hats over their moody brows, and clutched with eager fingers their sword hilts. A loud knock, and the door opened wide. The trample of rude soldiery was heard, and above the uproar rose the king's voice, commanding them "upon their lives not to come in." Then entered Charles, attended only by his nephew Charles, Prince Rupert's eldest brother, and the door remaining open, the Commons might see at the threshold his soldiers and their officers, some of whom had left their cloaks in the hall, while most were armed with pistols and swords, one Captain Hide standing next the door holding his sword upright in the scabbard.

Up the silent hall of St. Stephen's now moved the king uncovered, and the members, also uncovered, stood

silent on each side. Placing himself on the step in front of the Speaker's chair, he gazed earnestly around the House in quest of his victims. It must have been with a shock of dismay and dread that he found their places vacant! So he spoke: "Gentlemen, I am sorry for this occasion of coming among you. Yesterday I sent a serjeant-at-arms upon a very important occasion to apprehend some that by my command were accused of high treason; whereunto I did expect obedience, and not a message. And I must declare unto you here, that albeit no king that ever was in England shall be more careful of your privileges, to maintain them to the uttermost of his power, than I shall be, yet you must know that in cases of treason no person hath a privilege. And therefore I am come to know if any of these persons that were accused are here."

Again glancing round the crowded benches, he resumed: "So long as those persons that I have accused (for no slight crime, but for treason) are here, I cannot expect that this House will be in the right way I do heartily wish it. Therefore I am come to tell you that I must have them wherever I find them."

Again the king paused, then he exclaimed, "Is Mr. Pym here?" No answer was returned. "Is Mr. Hollis here?" No answer, and then next he addressed himself to Lenthall, the Speaker, who respectfully kneeling at his feet, begged him to believe that he had no eyes to see nor ears to hear, but at the pleasure of the House. After another long silence, Charles spoke again to the mute and angry faces around him. "The complete failure of his scheme was now accomplished, and all its possible consequences, all the suspicions and retaliations to which it had laid him open, appeared to

have rushed upon his mind. 'Well, since I see all my birds are flown, I do expect from you that you will send them unto me as soon as they return hither. But I assure you, on the word of a king, I never did intend any force, but shall proceed against them in a legal and fair way, for I never meant any other. And, now, since I see that I cannot do what I came for, I think this no unfit occasion to repeat what I have said formerly, that whatsoever I have done in favour, and to the good of my subjects, I do mean to maintain it. I will trouble you no more, but tell you I do expect, as soon as they come to the House, you will send them to me; otherwise I must take my own course to find them; for their treason was foul, and such a one as they would all thank him to discover.' Having ended his speech, he withdrew from the House in anger and disappointment, but he did not leave as he had entered, in silence. Low mutterings of fierce discontent broke out as he passed along, and many members cried aloud, so as he might hear them, '*Privilege! Privilege!*' With these words, ominous of ill, ringing in his ear, he repassed to his palace through the lane again formed of his armed adherents, and amid audible shouts of an evil augury from desperadoes disappointed of their prey."*

Six days later and Charles abandoned Whitehall, whither he was never to return but as a prisoner.

Hampden and his companions had obtained shelter and security in Coleman Street. They rested safely in the love and admiring confidence of their fellow-citizens, who placed themselves with eager hearts and open hands at their disposal. "London was in arms all night. The next day the shops were closed; the streets were filled

* Forster's "Arrest of the Five Members."

with immense crowds, the multitudes pressed round the king's coach, and insulted him with opprobrious cries. The House of Commons, in the meantime, appointed a committee to sit in the city, for the purpose of inquiring into the circumstances of the late outrage. The members of the committee were welcomed by a deputation of the Common Council. Merchant Tailors' Hall, Goldsmiths' Hall, and Grocers' Hall were fitted up for their sittings. A guard of respectable citizens, duly relieved twice a day, was posted at their doors. The sheriffs were charged to watch over the safety of the accused members, and to escort them to and from the committee with every mark of honour."*

Meanwhile, in the House of Commons, the opponents of the court had recovered their superiority. While Charles's friends were disgusted by his perfidy, his enemies received fresh encouragement from the ignominious failure of his criminal attempt. So an open defiance was sent forth. The five members were summoned by the House to return to their places, and the citizens resolved they should return in triumph. Four thousand Buckinghamshire freeholders rode up to London to rescue, protect, or escort their beloved champion and representative as need might be. All was pomp, and brilliancy, and exultation in the city; all was dismay, and wrath, and pusillanimity in Whitehall.

The river Thames has seen many curious and interesting spectacles, but assuredly none more curious or more interesting than that which its broad bright waters presented on the 11th of January, 1642. Its banks were thronged with acclaiming crowds, its bosom laboured with bannered boats. Two lines of gaily de-

* Macaulay's "Critical and Historical Essays."

corated vessels stretched from London Bridge to Westminster, and as the five members moved forward in a ship manned by sailors who had volunteered their services, loud shouts and bursts of ordnance filled the very heavens with their triumphal music.

From this time it was evident that Hampden, in many respects, was a changed man. Clarendon tells us that "His nature and carriage seemed much fiercer than before." He had done with measures of "moderation" and "calmness;" the gage thrown down by the king he was the first to take up, and upon the inevitable war he entered with all the resolution and enthusiasm which so eminently characterized the man. He drew the sword, and cast away the scabbard. There was no longer aught of hesitation, no paltering with great principles. The liberties of England were now to be placed at the stern arbitrament of war, and Hampden made haste to meet the trial as beseemed an Englishman and a patriot.

He immediately subscribed £2000 towards the public expenses; took up a colonel's commission in the army, and raised among his Buckinghamshire friends and tenants a regiment of notable troopers. He clothed them in a green uniform, and gave them a standard which bore, on one side, the watchword of the Parliament, "God with us"—a watchword which afterwards rose so triumphantly above the surges of battle at Marston Moor and Naseby—and, on the other, the device of the Hampdens—a device peculiarly illustrative of the character of the man—"Vestigia nulla retrorsum." As a soldier and an officer we have the testimony of his opponents that, on all occasions, "he performed his duty most punctually." He was very temperate in his diet,

and being "a supreme governor over all his passions and affections, had thereby a great power over other men's. He was of an industry and vigilance not to be tired out or wearied by the most laborious; and of parts not to be imposed upon by the most subtle or sharp; and of a personal courage equal to his best parts: so that he was an enemy not to be wished wherever he might have been a friend; and as much to be apprehended when he was so as any man could deserve to be."* His men were admirably disciplined, and their natural courage was further inspired by their leader's matchless intrepidity. Had Hampden lived he might, therefore, have acquired in the field a reputation only inferior to that which he possessed in the council. As it was, his keen, swift perception detected the erroneous plan on which the Earl of Essex, the parliamentary leader, was conducting his campaigns. Essex had extended his lines so far that he was unable to protect their exposed points, and the counties of Middlesex, Herts, Bucks, and Essex were consequently thrown open to the daring inroads of Prince Rupert and his cavaliers. Naturally the Roundheads chafed at the disgraceful inaction to which they were condemned, while the shires most loyal to their cause were thus overrun by fire and sword. To Hampden, as the man who alone could lead them to victory, the eyes of all the parliament's soldiers began to turn, and it is probable that the chief command of the army would have been placed in his hands had not his career been suddenly and fatally terminated. Boldness of design, rapidity of movement, quickness of perception, these were the qualities needed by the Roundhead general, and these

* Clarendon's "History of the Great Rebellion."

were eminently possessed by John Hampden. At Coventry, Southam, Worcester, Evesham, Edge Hill, and Reading, he had proved himself as skilful a leader as he was a daring soldier.

About twelve miles from Oxford lies a broad open plain, long known as Chalgrove Field, but now cut up into various grassy crofts and fertile meadows. It was here, at the opening of the Civil War, Hampden first mustered his Buckinghamshire soldiers. It was here on Sunday, the 18th of June, 1643, he received the death-wound that closed his noble life. A small mean pillar, erected two centuries later, commemorates the event, and proves how unworthy of the man and his career is the gratitude of modern England.

The headquarters of the Royalists, in June, 1643, were at Oxford. From thence, on the evening of the 17th, issued forth Prince Rupert and his troopers on one of those dashing forays so suited to the cavalier leader's genius and temper. At three o'clock on Sunday morning he pounced upon, and utterly routed, a small body of Roundheads at Potscombe, and riding off to Chinnor, burnt the village, killed or captured the Roundheads quartered there, and laden with plunder and prisoners, prepared to retire to the "city of colleges."

Hampden, who had previously, but in vain, pointed out to the Earl of Essex the weakness of this part of his lines, sent off a messenger to the general, to show that the enemy could only return by Chiselhampton Bridge, and that a force detached in that direction would assuredly intercept him. Meanwhile, gathering together what horse and dragoons he could, he spurred off in the track of Rupert's march to harass him as much as possible. He came up with the enemy on

Chalgrove Field. A hot fight ensued. But in the first charge the great patriot was sore wounded in the shoulder with two carabine balls, which breaking the bone, entered his body, and his arm hung powerless and shattered by his side. For the first time before the fight was done Hampden was seen to leave the battle-field — "a thing," writes Clarendon, in emphatic words, "he never used to"—riding very slowly, with his head bent down, and his hands resting on his horse's neck. Within sight rose the stately hall of Pyrton, where in his youth he had wooed and wedded his bride Elizabeth Simeon, and to that dear spot he would fain have betaken himself, but that Prince Rupert's cavalry lay before it. "In great pain and almost fainting," he turned his horse towards Thame, some ten miles from the battle-field, and reaching that quiet town, was received into the house (still standing) of a worthy Puritan, Ezekiel Browne. The surgeons immediately dressed his wounds, which were causing him intolerable pain, but they durst not affect to give him hope. He himself knew that the hurt was mortal, and calmly addressed himself to die. And first, he despatched letters of counsel to the Parliament, where so long he had been the ruling spirit, concerning public affairs and the condition of the army. Then from the hands of the rector of Chinnor, and Dr. Spurton, the chaplain of his Buckinghamshire regiment, he received the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the ritual of the Church of England, protesting that he thought "its doctrine in the greater part primitive and conformable to God's Word, as in Holy Scripture revealed." His intellect was still clear, and his judgment unimpaired. In the depths of his agony, "while well nigh spent and

labouring for breath," he was heard to gasp forth ejaculatory prayers for his country and himself. "O Lord, save my bleeding country. Have these realms in thy special keeping. Let the king see his error, and turn the hearts of his wicked councillors." And lastly: "Lord Jesus, receive my soul. O Lord save my country. O Lord, be merciful to——" And so John Hampden died.

He was buried in the chancel of Great Hampden Church, on Sunday, the 25th of June, 1643. As many soldiers as could be spared from the neighbouring quarters of the Parliament's army bore the corpse of their beloved leader to the grave, marching through the green Buckinghamshire lanes to the deathly roll of muffled drums, and lifting up with reverent voices the solemn words of the Psalmist: "In the morning they are like grass which groweth up: in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withered." (Ps. xc.) And when the sad ceremony was ended they chanted as they slowly returned to their tents the 43rd Psalm: "Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God." "Never," says a contemporary, "were heard such piteous cries at the death of one man as at Master Hampden's."

Thus passed away the truest and greatest spirit of all the true and great spirits whose immortal boast it is that, in the hour of uttermost peril, they saved the liberties and secured the rights of the people of Eng-

land. Both to parliament and king the loss was irreparable. "In Hampden, and in Hampden alone," says Lord Macaulay, in eloquent words which, when England gives her noblest patriot a monument, should be engraved as that patriot's epitaph, "were united all the qualities which, at such a crisis, were necessary to save the state; the valour and energy of Cromwell, the discernment and eloquence of Vane, the humanity and moderation of Manchester, the stern integrity of Hall, the ardent public spirit of Sydney. Others might possess the qualities which were necessary to save the popular party in the crisis of danger; he alone had both the power and the inclination to restrain its excesses in the hour of triumph. Others could conquer; he alone could reconcile. A heart as bold as his brought up the cuirassiers who turned the tide of battle on Marston Moor. As skilful an eye as his watched the Scotch army descending from the heights over Dunbar. But it was when to the sullen tyranny of Laud and Charles had succeeded the fierce conflict of sects and factions, ambitious of ascendancy, and burning for revenge, it was when the vices and ignorance which the old tyranny had generated threatened the new freedom with destruction, that England missed the sobriety, the self-command, the perfect soundness of judgment, the perfect rectitude of intention, to which the history of revolutions furnishes no parallel, or furnishes a parallel in Washington alone."

EDWARD HYDE, EARL OF CLARENDON.

(A.D. 1608—1674.)

"Justice, that sits and frowns where public laws
Exclude soft mercy from a private cause,
In your tribunal most herself does please;
There only smiles because she lives at ease."
DRYDEN, *To the Lord Chancellor, New Year's Day*, 1662

EDWARD HYDE, better known in English history as the Earl of Clarendon, was the third son of a private gentleman of good estate, and born at Dinton, in Wiltshire, in 1608.

He was educated for some years at Oxford with the view of qualifying himself for the church, but his two elder brothers having prematurely deceased the profession of the law was chosen for one who was now the heir of a wealthy landed gentleman, and at the age of sixteen he was removed to London. Here he pursued his studies with exemplary assiduity, not neglecting, however, to cultivate the lighter branches of letters, and enjoying with the zest of a fine intellect the company of many of his contemporaries—the learned Selden, the accomplished Falkland, the witty Carew, "judicious" Hales, grave Chillingworth, and the poet Waller —all of whom were destined to win the palm of immortality. By their wit combats and erudite disputa-

tions he acknowledges that he profited much; and so highly did the sagacious student appreciate the value of sitting at the feet of abler men, that he declares "he never was so proud, or thought himself so good a man, as when he was the worst [*i. e.* intellectually] man in the company."

His own parts, however, were such as would have enabled him to hold his own in any company; and having profited much by the instruction of his uncle, Lord Chief Justice Hyde, the ability and grave morals of "young Mr. Hyde" had already attracted the attention of Archbishop Laud and of other distinguished authorities. At the bar, indeed, he might have made a signal success, and have added his name to the long roll of England's legal worthies. But his fortune was considerable, and his ambition high. Looking around, and attentively considering the signs and portents of the times, he saw that Parliament was the arena for an active and courageous intellect, and in 1640 he entered the House of Commons. His predilection for a life of action is curiously manifested in the able treatise with which he amused his later years, entitled "An Essay on an Active and Contemplative Life, and why the One should be preferred before the Other." "A man," he says, "of a vigorous and active spirit, of perspicacity of judgment, and high thoughts, cannot enter too soon into the field of action; and to confine him to retirement, and to spend his life in contemplation, were to take his life from him." Hyde felt within himself the capacity for action, and plunged into the hot tumult of public life as the war-horse rushes into the press of battle.

It was a momentous epoch. Scotland was in open

revolt against the royal authority, and sternly rejected the Anglican Liturgy which Charles and Strafford sought to force upon her with arquebus and pike. In England a general spirit of discontent was abroad, and men began to mutter loudly against the oppressive measures of the court. Hampden's bold resistance to the illegal exaction of ship-money had aroused the country, from the northern borders to the black hills of Cornwall. Meanwhile, the king vainly struggled to subdue the Scottish "rebels" by force. His military means were inadequate to the task, and his treasury was empty.

The necessity of raising fresh supplies was fully apparent both to the king and his minister; but neither dared, in the present temper of the public mind, to attempt any of the old modes of taxation without the consent of Parliament. Charles had long reigned without a Parliament, and was unwilling to summon once more the potent spirit which he had found so difficult to chain; but no other resource remained to him, and a Parliament was convoked in the spring of 1640. The nation, gratified at the prospect of the re-establishment of constitutional government, and not yet awake to the fatal duplicity of their sovereign, sent up to Westminster an assemblage of men of moderate opinions, well disposed to respect the royal prerogative, and to carry out measures of reform without any tendency to violent changes. A Parliament of so conciliatory a spirit the king could hardly have expected to meet, but nevertheless its moderation was not servility, and Charles only needed a House of Commons to grant supplies and levy taxes. When that House began in the first place to examine into the grievances of which the country complained he took umbrage, and, to the regret of his

best and wisest advisers, summarily dissolved it. Hyde, in his "History of the Rebellion," does justice to the temperate and conciliatory feeling by which this short-lived Parliament was actuated, and condemns the king's impolicy in dismissing it. "No man," he says, "could imagine what offence the Commons had given."

During the brief interval that now intervened "the yoke was pressed down more severely than ever on the nation, while the spirit of the nation rose up more angrily than ever against the yoke." The Scotch army pressed forward into England, and the royal forces quietly retired at their approach. There was no money in the king's treasury, and no unanimity in the king's councils. Without resources and without credit, he was compelled once more to summon the representatives of the people, and in November, 1640, convoked that famous "Long Parliament," to whose courage, fidelity, and firmness we are indebted for the rights we cherish, and the liberties we enjoy.

The Commons met at Westminster, in no mood to surrender their privileges to the king. No dissension was visible in their ranks. Hyde and Falkland were no less earnest in demanding reform than Pym and Hampden, and the great grievances of which the English people complained were swept away with firm and decided hands. But the great blow struck by this Parliament in its first memorable session, was the impeachment of Strafford. The men who, six months before, to use Clarendon's own language, "were observed to be of very moderate tempers, and to wish that gentle remedies might be applied, talked now in another dialect both of kings and persons, and said that they must now be of another temper than they were the last

Parliament." In Strafford, they recognized the chief obstacle to constitutional reform. They dreaded his ability, his unconquerable resolution, his unquailing purpose. His fall was determined upon, and in the measures which secured it Hyde bore an important share.

But now a reaction took place, and two parties sprang into existence in the Parliament; one, the constitutional royalists, or moderate reformers, to use a phrase of to-day, who were satisfied with the triumphs already obtained, and the rights and privileges secured; the other, the Puritans, or extreme reformers, who were perhaps determined to pause at nothing short of the downfall of the monarchy and the separation of Church and State. The chiefs of the former were Hyde, Falkland, and Colepepper; of the latter, Hampden, Denzil Hollis, Pym, and Haslerig. These protested that the king could not be trusted; that no faith could be put in his most solemn promises, and that the people must therefore secure themselves beyond all fear of future oppression.

The first great struggle between the two parties took place on the 22nd of November, 1641, when the Grand Remonstrance (see pp. 58, 59) was carried by the opposition by a majority of only eleven votes. This result showed the unexpected strength of the court party. "It could not be doubted," says Lord Macaulay, "that only some great indiscretion could prevent them from shortly obtaining the predominance in the Lower House. The Upper House was already their own. Nothing was wanting to insure their success, but that the king should, in all his conduct, show respect for the laws, and scrupulous good faith towards his subjects."

It seemed, at first, that Charles had learned something from the past, and was not indisposed to enter upon a wise and happy career as the constitutional sovereign of a free people. He summoned to his councils the three leaders of the moderate reformers, Hyde, Falkland, and Colepepper, and assured them that he would be entirely guided by their advice, and take no step without consulting them. But this fair prospect was soon overcast. At heart Charles was essentially a despot, and hated the moderate counsels and constitutional moralities of Hyde almost as much as the more levelling doctrines of Pym. If he listened to Hyde's advice, it soon appeared he did not intend to act upon it. He preferred the weak and criminal counsels of the gay and volatile courtiers who fluttered around him and his queen. Within a few days of his promises to Hyde and Falkland, he plunged into an abyss of folly and wickedness, not only without consulting them, but carefully concealing from them his intention. With "shame and dismay" these trustworthy councillors heard of his impeachment at the bar of the Lords of the five leading members of the House of Commons. With keener shame and greater dismay they were compelled to witness his inroad with armed men upon the sanctity of Parliament, and his mad but futile attempt to seize by force the chiefs of the opposition.

When the civil war broke out, in 1642, Hyde and Falkland, and many others of moderate opinions, were placed in a situation of peculiar delicacy. They condemned the arbitrary conduct of the monarch, and yet were sincerely attached to the principle of monarchy. They reverenced the throne, while they could not but censure its occupant. With the Puritan party they

had little sympathy. Men of good birth and liberal fortunes, they shrank from the crop-eared Puritan and levelling Roundhead. They adhered, therefore, to the royal cause, though not without compunction, until, as the war progressed, and the designs of the Parliamentary leaders became more evident, they forgot the errors of the king in his misfortunes, and in the dangers with which the throne was menaced.

Mr. Hyde accompanied the king to Oxford, and received there the appointment of Chancellor of the Exchequer. His services and parts were further rewarded with the dignity of knighthood. But Charles, if he respected, did not love his grave and honest councillor; his admonitions bore too much the colour of reproofs. Sir Edward, on the other hand, was indignant at the indifference with which his advice was received. In March, 1644, therefore, he quitted the royal court, and at the king's command accompanied Prince Charles* into Devonshire, from whence, at the approach of Fairfax, they fled to Jersey. He remained in that picturesque ocean-fastness after the prince's departure, and, afar from the storm of battle, indulged himself in the pleasures of a lettered ease, chiefly occupying himself in the composition of his admirable "History of the Rebellion."

Faithful, however, to his monarchical principles, he quitted the island in 1648, and joined Prince Charles at his retreat in Holland. In the following year he was despatched on an embassy to Madrid, in the hope of enlisting the King of Spain in the royal cause. He

* Hyde had for some time been in attendance on the young prince. At Edgehill fight he was specially entrusted with the care both of Prince Charles and the Duke of York.

gives, in his Memoirs, an affecting picture of the contemptuous neglect with which he was treated, and the privations which he endured, being often reduced to the extremities of want. In 1651, the Spanish Government, at the instance of the English Parliament, ordered him to quit the kingdom, and Sir Edward then made his way to his family, whom he had settled at Antwerp, and after a brief interval of rest, repaired to the mimic court which was maintained by the exiled Charles at Paris.

From that time until the restoration of the exile to his father's throne, Sir Edward remained in close and faithful attendance upon him, sharing his poverty, but censuring his gaieties, and maintaining what concord he could among the distressed and libertine adherents to the royal cause. Charles was a man of too keen an intellect not to appreciate the virtues and abilities of his grave adviser, and besides rewarding him with the then empty dignity of Lord High Chancellor, paid him the compliment of listening to his counsels with respect, even when bent upon disregarding them. The privations which both king and courtiers endured during their long exile were, indeed, calculated to test the good-humour of the one and the fidelity of the other. "I have neither clothes nor fire," writes Clarendon in 1652, "to preserve me from the sharpness of the season." What money the volatile Charles could raise were expended on his pleasures, on women of light character, on new clothes and beaver hats, and then followed a season of miserable poverty, when both the king and his servants would need even the common necessaries of life.

In June, 1654, Charles was compelled to withdraw from Paris, and receiving the arrears of an allowance granted by the French king, retired to Spa, whence he removed to Aix-la-Chapelle, and in September to Cologne. At this period his sole income for himself and court was but 600 pistoles a month.

He removed in 1657 to Bruges, still attended by his Lord High Chancellor, and here he mainly resided until the hopes of the Royalist party were once more excited by the death of Cromwell. For the convenience of being nearer to the scene of action, he then repaired to Brussels, and finally, in 1660, when Monk had prepared the way for his return, to the Hague, where he embarked for England in the company of Sir Edward Hyde and his principal courtiers.

The chancellor accompanied his wayward master in his triumphal progress to London, and on the 1st of June, 1660, took his seat in the Lords as Speaker, and also sat *pro formâ* in the Court of Chancery. His position at this time, as the chief and most trusted councillor of the king, was a splendid one, and the whole power of the government virtually rested in his hands. He was the first subject in England, and the marriage of his daughter Anne, in September 1660, to the Duke of York, the heir-apparent to the throne, seemed to strengthen him beyond all possibility of change.

The episode of Anne Hyde's marriage requires a little illustration. She was born in 1638; accompanied her father in his exile; and at an early age was appointed Maid of Honour to the Princess of Orange, Charles II.'s eldest sister. She attended the princess in 1659, on a visit to Paris, where she attracted the

attention of the Duke of York (afterwards James II.), and so far won upon his admiration that they were contracted in marriage, at Breda, on the 24th of November, 1659. In due time it became apparent that she was on the eve of giving birth to a child; but the Restoration had taken place, and it seemed improbable that the future king of England would now be willing to fulfil the contract he had made in times of trouble and poverty. The intelligence of his daughter's critical position was thus made known to the great chancellor, who broke out, he tells us, into a fit of violent passion, and protested that for the security of the throne he would rather be content with his daughter's dishonour than that she should marry the royal duke. Whether his loyalty would really have endured such a trial is doubtful, but it was rendered unnecessary by Charles II.'s consent to the marriage having been granted at the earnest petition of his brother. The nuptials were accordingly celebrated on the 3rd of September, 1660, at the Lord Chancellor's residence, Worcester House, in the Strand.

Anne Hyde lived until 1671, and bore the duke two daughters, both of whom, Mary and Anne, became Queens of England. She herself is said by De Grammont to have had "a majestic air, a pretty good shape, not much beauty, a great deal of wit, and so just a discernment of merit, that whoever, of either sex, were possessed of it were sure to be distinguished by her; an air of grandeur in all her actions made her be considered as if born to support the rank which placed her so near the throne." "She composed well," says Bishop Burnet, "had acquired considerable information from books; was a kind and generous friend, but a severe enemy."

The chancellor was created Earl of Clarendon at the coronation, in 1661, and presented by the king with a gift of £20,000. His services were also liberally rewarded with large estates, and he maintained an ostentation in his household and equipage which outrivalled the royal pomp. We have said his position was a splendid one, but it was also one of great difficulty. "In some instances," says Lord Macaulay, "he was well fitted for his great place. No man wrote abler state-papers. No man spoke with more weight and dignity in Council and in Parliament. No man was better acquainted with general maxims of state-craft. No man observed the varieties of character with a more discriminating eye. It must be added that he had a strong sense of moral and religious obligation, a sincere reverence for the laws of his country, and a conscientious regard for the honour and interest of the Crown." On the other hand, his faults were conspicuous; his temper was arbitrary and vehement. His arrogance was immeasurable. His gravity assumed the character of censoriousness. As a politician his views had been narrowed by his years of exile, and having learned nothing from the past but lessons of fear and apprehension, he set before himself, as the only duty of a loyal subject, the establishment of the royal prerogative by every possible safeguard. He forgot that it was a time of transition; that it was impossible to return either to the days of James I. or of the Long Parliament; that new views and new ideas were fermenting in the minds of the people, and that the qualifications a politician now required were, above all others, tact, plasticity, and moderation.

But he hated the Puritans, and he aroused their

enmity in return by a series of acts of persecution. His pure morality and decorous gravity revolted from the dissipation of Charles's court, and he incurred, by his loud and open censure, the hatred of Charles's courtiers. He wished to economise the king's revenues, and by so doing, was regarded as the personal enemy of every needy royalist. To raise money he sold Dunkirk, which Cromwell had wrested from reluctant Spain, to Louis XIV., and every Englishman who remembered the glories of the Protectorate burned with indignation. War broke out with the Dutch, and the House of Commons voted liberal supplies for its prosecution. But these were embezzled by a knot of dissolute courtiers, while the seamen were driven into mutiny, the forts left unguarded, and the ships of war unmanned, disarmed, and unrigged. A Dutch fleet sailed up the Thames, and set fire to the ships which lay at Chatham. The thunder of their guns was heard in London, and, in a state of panic, the ministry concluded a disgraceful peace. All these indignities were attributed, though most unjustly, to the misconduct of the proud and indolent chancellor.

"His virtues and his vices," again we quote from Lord Macaulay, "alike contributed to his ruin. He was the ostensible head of the administration, and was, therefore, held responsible for those acts which he had strongly, but vainly, opposed in Council. He was regarded by the Puritans, and by all who pitied them, as an implacable bigot, a second Laud, with much more than Laud's understanding. He had on all occasions maintained that the Act of Indemnity ought to be strictly observed; and this part of his conduct, though highly honourable to him, made him hateful to all those

Royalists who wished to repair their ruined fortunes by suing the Roundheads for damages and mesne profits. The Presbyterians of Scotland attributed to him the downfall of their church. The Papists of Ireland attributed to him the loss of their lands. As father of the Duchess of York he had an obvious motive for wishing that there might be a barren queen; and he was, therefore, suspected of having purposely recommended one. The sale of Dunkirk was justly imputed to him. For the war with Holland he was, with less justice, held accountable. His hot temper, his arrogant deportment, the indelicate eagerness with which he grasped at riches, the ostentation with which he squandered them, his picture gallery, filled with masterpieces of Vandyke, which had once been the property of ruined cavaliers; his palace, which reared its long and stately front right opposite to the humbler residence of our kings, drew on him much deserved and some undeserved censure. When the Dutch fleet was in the Thames, it was against the chancellor that the rage of the populace was chiefly directed. His windows were broken, the trees of his garden were cut down, and a gibbet was set up before his door."

If such were the feelings with which he was regarded by the different classes of the public, he met with no warmer or kindlier reception at court. The king had long borne with his infirmities in consideration of his services, and submitted to his long lectures with as good a grace as possible; but the constant complaints of his courtiers and his own weariness of reproofs which daily grew longer and harsher, had begun to affect the chancellor's position. The sharp tongues of Buckingham and Killigrew, Sedley and Buckhurst, were

never tired of ridiculing Clarendon's obesity, luxury, and haughtiness; his scorn of others, his pampering of himself, his outbursts of passionate vehemence in the Council and the royal presence. The king's mistresses hated him, for he censured their looseness of life, and inveighed against their extravagance. Thus, public and private causes conspired to ensure the great statesman's downfall.

It came at last. The stately edifice of his fortunes toppled with a great crash. He was deprived of the Great Seal; he was impeached by the Commons of high treason, and doomed, by an Act of Parliament, to perpetual banishment. To save his head he fled at once to the Continent (A.D. 1666). In France he met with a respectful reception, and found that security which an ungrateful country, to whom his virtues were, perhaps, more hateful than his faults, denied him. The remainder of his life was occupied in literary pursuits; in the compilation of works which we still treasure up among our English classics. Of these the most valuable is the "History of the Rebellion," in which he describes the events he himself had acted in, or whose actors he had personally known, in a clear and copious style, adorned by many passages of picturesque narration, and by masterly characters of his more eminent contemporaries. Occasionally, it is true, he wanders with a tedious prolixity, and exhibits his political prejudices with a disagreeable minuteness. But the book, as a whole, is a masterpiece, and one of the greatest ornaments of the historical literature of England.

To his "Essay on an Active and Contemplative Life" we have already referred. His other works are quickly enumerated:—a "Sketch of his Own Life;"

a "Vindication of himself from the charge of High Treason;" "Dialogues on Education, and the Want of Respect paid to Age;" "Miscellaneous Essays;" and "Contemplation on the Psalms of David."

The great earl died at Rouen in 1674, in his sixty-seventh year, and was succeeded in his title and estates by his weak and worthless son, Henry Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, who held for a short time, in the reign of James II., the Lord-lieutenancy of Ireland. His second son, Earl of Rochester, was James's Lord High Treasurer, until he refused to become a convert to Papacy. Both eventually deserted their royal brother-in-law, and swore allegiance to William of Orange, whose wife Mary was, however, their niece.

HENRY ST. JOHN, VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

(A.D. 1678–1751.)

"Whatever subject Lord Bolingbroke wrote or spoke upon, he adorned with the most splendid eloquence; not a studied or laboured eloquence, but such a flowing happiness of diction which (from care, perhaps, at first) became so familiar to him, that even his most familiar conversations, if taken down in writing, would bear the press without the least correction either as to method or style."—LORD CHESTERFIELD.

HENRY ST. JOHN, VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE, is, perhaps, best known to the world of English readers through the laboured eulogiums of Pope. Who, indeed, does not remember the impassioned opening of the "Essay on Man"—

> "Awake, my St. John, leave all meaner things
> To low ambition and the pride of kings?"

the graceful compliment—

> "Fix'd to no spot is happiness sincere;
> 'Tis nowhere to be found, or everywhere;
> 'Tis never to be bought, but always free,
> And, fled from monarchs, St. John! dwells with thee?"

Again—

> "There St. John mingles with my friendly bowl,
> The feast of reason and the flow of soul!"

But very few, even among the more assiduous students of English literature, have read the "Idea of a Patriot King"—that rhapsodical essay of an Utopian politician—or the clever generalities of the "Letters on the Study of History." Not many among the most inveterate analysts of our parliamentary annals have followed up with any lively interest the intrigues of which, in the times of "good Queen Anne," Bolingbroke was the guiding spirit. The reason is obvious. Though in his several capacities as orator, statesman, and author, he holds no inconsiderable position among our English worthies, yet his genius made no mark upon the spirit of his age. As a politician he effected nothing; as a writer, he in no wise influenced English literature. He formed no school of authors; he created no political party. His was the folly to seek to re-establish on the throne a dynasty of whose incapacity successive generations of Englishmen had been fatally convinced, and to maunder over a creed of pseudo-philosophy, which was only rendered endurable to men of sense by the elegant poetry of Pope, whom he selected as the medium of recommending it to the public. In fact, he was brilliant but shallow; a theorist, rather than a philosopher; an intriguing politician, and not a sagacious statesman; a facile creator of sparkling sentences, which seemed to wrap up an infinity of original paradox, but not a writer of judgment, reflection, depth, or comprehensiveness. In some respects he was the "Alcibiades" of his time—gay, generous, impetuous, daring, and brilliant—an admirable boon companion, an agreeable friend, a fascinating lover!

This versatile and accomplished man played, however, a conspicuous part in the drama of his stormy

times, and may, therefore, we fancy, be correctly included in our list of eminent English statesmen.

He was the only son of Sir Henry St. John, of Lydiard Tregoze, in the county of Wiltshire, by Mary, second daughter of Rich, Earl of Warwick. He was born at Battersea on the 1st of October, 1678, then a pleasant rural village on the banks of the "silver" Thames, but now an odorous and not altogether agreeable suburb of the great metropolis. At an early age he was entrusted to the care of his grandmother, an excellent Presbyterian, who selected for him a Presbyterian tutor, one Daniel Burgess—a man in whom the severity of Nonconformist principles had by no means extinguished the light of his natural humour. Half wit, half Presbyterian, he was no suitable instructor for the youthful St. John, whose gaiety of character and versatility of talent were already conspicuous. Still less could he profit by the paternal example, for his father was notorious even in that age for the debaucheries in which he wallowed, and some authorities accuse him of having committed a murder, and escaped the penalty only through his rank and wealth.

From the alternate jests and lessons of Burgess the young St. John was removed to Eton, where he was a contemporary with his future rival, Robert Walpole, and afterwards to Christ Church, Oxford. As a scholar he gained no particular reputation, but was respected on account of his great natural abilities. Having completed the usual university curriculum he repaired to London, and flung himself, at once, into all its dissipations. His social talents, his breeding, his handsome countenance and figure, all fitted him to shine in the Circean circle of London society. The wit was

charmed by his readiness, the *bon vivant* by his devotion to the wine cup, and the beauty by the grace of his address and the elegance of his person. So thorough, indeed, was his apprenticeship to the eleusinia of "fashionable life," and his extravagance so great, that his father grew weary of the demands made upon his resources, and at last, as the only effectual check to his dissipation, sent him abroad. At Paris the brilliant Englishman was as much admired as in London, but learnt something more, for he acquired an excellent knowledge of the French language and literature.

Returning to England, he married, in 1700, a lady of wealth, the daughter and co-heiress of the opulent Sir Henry Winchescomb; but the union proved a most unhappy one, and after a few sad months was terminated by a legal separation. Meanwhile he made his *debût* in political life as member of Parliament for Wootton Bassett, a borough which his father had formerly represented. Both his father and grandfather had been zealously attached to the Whig party, whose leaders still administered affairs; but with his usual perversity, St. John attached himself to Harley, and engaged with him in a bold attempt to secure power by a coalition of the younger members of both the Tory and Whig factions. They were so far successful that, in 1704, Harley entered the ministry as Secretary of State, and St. John as Secretary of War, through the influence and at the recommendation of the great Duke of Marlborough, among whose adherents they were inclined to be ranked. And it should here be noted that both Harley and Bolingbroke at this time lavished the most fulsome eulogiums upon the victor of Blenheim, whose capacity and courage they afterwards ventured so

infamously to malign, and to whose favour they were, nevertheless, indebted for their official positions. Thus St. John writes:—"I thank you, my lord, for thinking me so zealous for the public, and so faithful a servant to you. Whatever situation of life I am in, your grace will never be deceived in this opinion. I have all the force of inclination, as well as the strongest ties of gratitude, to bind me to you." (Aug. 18th, 1705.) And in 1706 a formal coalition between the Whigs and the moderate Tories was effected under the auspices of Marlborough and Lord Godolphin on the one side, and Harley and St. John on the other.

But Harley was aiming at a high prize, while he thus cloaked his designs with the ablest dissimulation. In secret, through the influence of his kinswoman, the famous Abigail Hill, better known by her married name of Mrs. Masham, he was stealthily securing the confidence of the queen, and undermining the influence previously enjoyed by Godolphin and Marlborough. That the queen was favourably disposed towards her half-brother, "the Pretender," is now well-known, and it was Harley's object to construct a Jacobite party which should secure the restoration of the son of James II. to the English throne upon Queen Anne's death, if he accepted Protestant principles. These machinations in which, to some extent, St. John shared, were artfully conducted, but could not altogether be concealed from the knowledge of the ministry. One of Harley's clerks, a certain William Guy, was detected in carrying on a treasonable correspondence with Chamillart, the French minister; and though Harley's implication in the treason could not be openly proved, enough suspicion was excited to secure Godolphin and

Marlborough a victory over their rival. They refused to attend the council while Harley remained in office, and as the Duke of Somerset and others declined to discuss public questions during their absence, the queen was compelled to dismiss her favourite councillor. With him retired St. John, whose office—the Secretaryship of War—was immediately conferred upon Mr. Robert Walpole, a young and rising politician, and thus the foundation was laid of a bitter and life-long animosity. The disgraced secretary at the same time retired from the House of Commons, and betook himself to the solitude of a country life, assiduously devoting himself to study with the view of remedying those deficiencies in solid and ready information of which his parliamentary experience had made him conscious.

While St. John thus occupied himself in the agreeable pursuit of letters, Harley plunged with redoubled vigour into the vortex of political intrigue, and by means of Mrs. Masham's influence with the queen, secretly undermined the position of the Whig ministers. To his success, the Duchess of Marlborough, by her intolerable pride and unmannerly arrogance, greatly contributed. It soon became evident that the Tory conspirators were highly favoured at court, and the queen seized every opportunity of showing her dislike to the Whigs. At last, encouraged by Harley, she dismissed from office Marlborough's son-in-law, the Earl of Sunderland, and shortly afterwards, the able and honourable Godolphin. Harley was immediately made Chancellor of the Exchequer, and a Tory cabinet was formed, in which St. John, recalled from his lettered ease to political ambition, took his seat as Secretary of State (A. D. 1710).

St. John's services proved of the highest value to

the new ministry. He drew around him a circle of powerful wits and essayists, who excited the town by their daily attacks on the unfortunate Whigs. A paper was set on foot, the "Examiner," in which Swift's sardonic humour and biting satire was constantly displayed, and in whose columns appeared St. John's famous "Letter to the 'Examiner,'" a fierce and powerful attack on the Whig leaders, and especially on the Duchess of Marlborough, who was designated "a fury broke loose to execute the vengeance of heaven on a sinful people." In vain a reply was attempted by Earl Cowper, and the Whig pamphleteers. St. John's "Letter" was everywhere perused by eager readers, and produced a remarkable effect upon the public mind.

A new Parliament met on the 25th of November, 1710, and it was soon perceived that its temper was favourable to the Tory party. The war which had formerly been so popular with the nation, and which had been illustrated by the victories of Blenheim, Ramillies, and Oudenarde, was now denounced as intolerable and ruinous, though it had saved the interests of the Protestant cause, and effectually checked the aggressive ambition of Louis XIV. Marlborough, the great general, formerly idolised by the people as the worthy successor of the Black Prince and Henry V., was loaded with affronts, though his genius had retrieved the military fame of England, and humbled the ablest chiefs whom France could boast of. Swift, in the "Examiner," denied his talents as a general and impeached his character as a statesmen, while he loaded the duchess with the coarsest and most virulent abuse. In recompense, he was elevated to a Deanery. But if Harley could thus far congratulate himself on the suc-

cess of his projects, he knew that his position was by no means a secure one. His most dangerous enemy was in his own cabinet—St. John, who had risen through his influence, and thriven upon his patronage. A romantic incident saved him, however, from the premature downfall which St. John's ambition meditated. Among the numerous spies maintained in the service of the English Government, was a certain Marquis de Guiscard, a clever but unprincipled debauché, who was one of St. John's boon companions over the bottle, and the accomplice of his wild and extravagant dissipations.

At first this dissolute scoundrel received a payment of £500 per annum, but both Harley and St. John finding reason to doubt the value of his discoveries, it was reduced to £400. Guiscard immediately conceived a violent hatred against the two ministers, and offered his services to the French Government as a spy on the English court. The intrigue was discovered, and the intriguer arrested. Brought before the privy council for examination, he requested leave to speak in private to St. John, but St. John denied him. "That is hard," exclaimed the spy; "not one word?" and suddenly rushing upon Harley, he cried, "Have at thee, then!" and stabbed him with a penknife. So violent was the blow that it carried Harley to the ground, bathed in blood. The whole council immediately rose up in dismay, and St. John, drawing his sword, exclaimed, "The villain has killed Mr. Harley!" and ran him through. His colleagues in like manner, rushing upon the assassin, dealt him several blows, until, the attendants entering, he was surrounded and removed to prison. In Newgate he was visited by several members of the council, as he declared himself able to make

some important revelations. These, as far as they went, pointed at St. John's complicity in a conspiracy against the Protestant Succession, but he abruptly ended them by assuming a sudden and mysterious silence. Probably St. John bribed him into this reserve by holding out hopes of his escape from punishment; hopes not to be fulfilled, for in a few weeks the marquis died in prison of the wounds he had received.

Such, at least, is the version of this transaction handed down to us by Tory writers; but some French authorities represent Guiscard as a nobleman of Languedoc, who had visited England to obtain assistance from the English Government for the insurgent Protestants of Languedoc and the Cevennes. At first he was encouraged by Harley and St. John to hope for the aid of English troops; but afterwards, when they determined, in order to disgrace and defeat the Whig party, to make peace with France on any conditions, his importunities were coldly rejected, and his overtures treated with contempt. Hence he was excited to avenge upon the ministers the disappointment they had inflicted, a blow to his own eager hopes, and a death-stroke to the interests of Protestantism in the district of the Cevennes.

But such is the perversity of fortune, and such are the mysteries of party, that this gallant and noble-minded advocate of Protestant interests was proclaimed before the public a low debauché and a Papist spy! It was said that he was commissioned by France to destroy Harley, the "champion of the English church," the pillar of Protestantism, the great statesman whose abilities were so dreaded by the Catholic powers! Harley became a hero, and was rewarded with the earl-

dom of Oxford and Mortimer, and the barony of Wigmore. He was also honoured with the office of Lord Treasurer, and became the virtual head of the Cabinet.

Harley's promotion to the peerage, however, opened the way for the more active exercise of St. John's abilities and ambition. He became the ministerial leader of the House of Commons, and energetically plunged into wild and extravagant projects for the restoration of the Stuart dynasty to the English throne. He entered into a close correspondence with the Pretender's court at St. Germain's, encouraged, there is reason to believe, by the queen herself, who cherished an exceeding hatred against the house of Hanover. Further to ingratiate himself with the queen, and the queen's favourite, he appointed to the command of an expedition against Quebec, then the capital of French Canada, Mrs. Masham's brother, the notable "Jack Hill," a general of notorious incapacity, a mere carpet-soldier, whose only claim to notice was his relationship to the queen's bedchamber-woman! The expedition was necessarily a miserable failure, resulting in a serious loss of life, in an extravagant expenditure of the public money, and a signal disgrace to the arms of England.

The year 1712 was signalized by the commencement of the negotiations which led to the conclusion of the memorable Treaty of Utrecht—a peace which may be said to have saved the French kingdom from destruction, and which was, to some extent, an unsatisfactory close to the long and glorious war waged by England with so much vigour and success. But, nevertheless, it secured many advantages, and did not deserve the opprobrium with which the Whigs loaded it. Posterity, regarding it with calmer eye, and unmoved by political prejudice,

cannot stigmatize it as either disgraceful or deplorable, though we may admit that the Tory government, in their eagerness to conclude the brilliant series of campaigns by which Marlborough and his Whig adherents had gained so much glory, and acquired so dangerous an influence, made too many concessions to the pride and ambition of France.

But if we are inclined to dispute the obloquy with which some historians have invested the peace of Utrecht, no apology can be made for the mean and virulent persecutions inflicted by the Tories on the greatest Captain of the age. Not content with dismissing him from all his offices they harassed him with charges of peculation and corruption, denied his capacity, and insinuated suspicions against his courage. The Tory pamphleteers hounded him down with ribald license; and in this war of words, no one fought with greater skill and less regard for truth, generosity, and justice, than the witty and unscrupulous Dean of St. Patrick's, Jonathan Swift.

As a reward for his services in conducting the negotiations concluded at Utrecht, St. John was raised to the peerage by the title of Viscount Bolingbroke, but the reward only served to embitter his animosity against Harley. He had hoped to have been gratified with the earldom formerly enjoyed by his cousin Paulett, and ascribed his disappointment to the influence of the Lord Treasurer, whom he suspected of prejudicing the queen against him. He was now despatched on an Embassy to Paris (August 1712), to remove some impediments which had arisen in the course of the complicated negotiations—or, shall we say, manœuvres?—between France and England. In this new capacity he gained no ac-

cession of credit. He was even accused of betraying the secrets of the English court. The French minister, Monsieur de Torcy, aware of Bolingbroke's weakness with respect to women, introduced him to the favour of the frail but accomplished Madame Tencin, who, it is said, contrived, on one occasion, to carry off from the amorous diplomatist's table some despatches and private papers of great importance.

On his return to England he found that Harley had been honoured with the Order of the Garter—a distinction which the ambitious diplomatist had considered destined for himself. Fresh fuel was thus added to the fire of hatred which already glowed with sufficient ardour, and Bolingbroke resolved to effect his rival's overthrow. It was first necessary to conclude those negotiations with the French court in which he was directly implicated, and, at length, peace with France was signed at Utrecht, in concert with Holland, Prussia, Portugal, and Savoy. It was proclaimed on the 4th of May, 1713, exactly eleven years after the commencement of the war.

On Bolingbroke's conduct in the transaction we may reasonably adopt Mr. Hallam's conclusions:—"That an English minister should have thrown himself into the arms of his enemy," he exclaims, "at the first overture of negotiation; that he should have renounced advantages on which he might have insisted; that throughout the whole correspondence, and in all personal interviews with De Torcy, he should have shown the triumphant Queen of Great Britain more eager for peace than her vanquished adversary; that the two courts should have been virtually conspiring against those allies without whom we had bound ourselves to enter on no treaty;

that we should have withdrawn our troops in the midst of a campaign, and even seized upon the towns of our confederates, while we left them exposed to be overwhelmed by a superior force; that we should have thus deceived those confederates by the most direct falsehood in denying our clandestine treaty, and then dictated to them its acceptance—are facts so disgraceful to Bolingbroke, and in somewhat a less degree to Oxford, that they can hardly be palliated by establishing the expediency of the treaty itself."

We have no inclination to dwell at any length upon the complicated intrigues in which Bolingbroke now indulged. For his active spirit and enterprising genius they appear to have had a peculiar attraction, and they were so far successful that a large party was formed which openly proclaimed its aversion to the Hanoverian succession. One of the agents of the court of St. Germain's wrote that everything went on to the Pretender's advantage, and that none but his friends were advanced or employed. "In order to serve the great project, Miss, now Lady Masham, who had formerly been the friend and confidante of Harley, was won over to Bolingbroke's party by his energy, address, and eloquence; and the prospect of another Stuart king, in the person of the son of James II., daily became more probable. Meanwhile, Bolingbroke's influence rapidly extended. He introduced into the ministry several of his immediate friends, and openly avowed his opposition to Oxford. With the queen he occupied a position of great favour, and though Harley still clung to office with miserable tenacity, all real power was virtually settled in Bolingbroke, who, that he might ingratiate himself with the High Church party, now

introduced the abominable Schism Bill, which enjoined 'that no person in Great Britain should keep any school, or act as tutor, who had not first subscribed the declaration to conform to the Church of England, and obtained a license of the diocesan; and, upon failure of so doing, the party might be committed to prison without bail; and that no such license should be granted before the party produced a certificate of his having received the sacrament according to the communion of the Church of England within the last year, and also subscribed the oaths of allegiance and supremacy.'"

In spite of a vigorous opposition this iniquitous measure of persecution was passed through the two Houses of Parliament—carried by enormous majorities in the Commons, and by a very small majority in the Lords. It was followed up by the dismissal of Oxford, and the elevation to the premiership of Bolingbroke, who, more daring and courageous than his rival, had thus succeeded in the great trial of strength, and attained the object of his ambition. But in the very hour of his success the stroke of ruin fell upon him. He had plotted against his early friend; he had disgraced his country by his concessions to France; he had betrayed his colleagues and undermined his chief; he had sought to hand over England to the mercies of a bigoted Papist; and he had so far succeeded, that office, and power, and influence were his, and a few months of government would enable him to restore a dynasty to the throne of England, and secure such rewards as a king might naturally bestow on the statesman to whom he owed everything. But the hour of his triumph was the hour of his downfall. On the 29th of July, to the utter

Queen Anne, with faltering movement, placed the white staff in Shrewsbury's hands and said, "Use it for the good of my people."—p. 99.

consternation of the Jacobite party, Queen Anne, whose health had been severely tried by the altercations and rivalries of Oxford and Bolingbroke, was seized with an access of illness, and put to bed in a high fever. Bolingbroke was overpowered by the suddenness of the crisis. He summoned his principal adherents to council, in a chamber at Kensington Palace, near the room where lay the dying queen; but so severe was the blow, and so unexpected, that they could determine upon no reasonable plan of action, while the Whig statesmen, convinced of the gravity of the situation, were resolutely prepared to grapple with its dangers. The three great Whig dukes, Somerset, Argyle, and Shrewsbury, assembled in the royal council-room, and, as the post of Lord Treasurer was not yet filled up, Argyle and Somerset proposed that it should be conferred on the Duke of Shrewsbury. Bolingbroke could offer no opposition. All his plans were fruitless, all his hopes frustrated, he moved as one in a dream, or who had received a sudden death-shock. He followed the three dukes into the royal chamber, and looked on with a pale brow, while the queen, with faltering movement, placed the white staff in Shrewsbury's hands, and said, "For God's sake, use it for the good of my people." Immediate steps were taken to secure the peaceable proclamation of the Elector of Hanover; and, on the the death of Anne, at seven o'clock on the morning of Sunday, the 1st of August, 1714, George I. ascended the English throne, with the hearty assent of the majority of the people of Great Britain.

The vengeance of the Whigs immediately lighted upon Bolingbroke. The Lord's Justices, appointed by the Council of Regency, appointed Addison their se-

cretary, and ordered that all papers addressed to Bolingbroke should be delivered to him. Even before George I. arrived in England he took care to notify to the aspiring minister who had so nearly shipwrecked the Hanoverian succession, his dismissal from office, and the royal commands were executed by Lords Shrewsbury, Somerset, and Cowper, with a vindictive rudeness. Addison declares that the removal was "very much relished by the people," while to the Jacobite party it was undoubtedly a severe discouragement, as it showed that their intrigues were plainly understood. His papers were seized by the Duke of Shrewsbury; but not before his faithful friend, Mr. Under-Secretary Hare, had contrived to remove the most dangerous. These, however, Bolingbroke, with his wonted haughty courage, contemptuously returned to the Whig ministers.

But he soon became aware that his enemies were drawing the toils closely around him, and he knew too well what accurate evidence existed of his bold and adventurous treason. He felt that he could not, like his rival Oxford, confront an impeachment with any chance of security. He knew that he was a baffled traitor, a detected conspirator, and he prepared to fly. Accordingly on Friday, the 25th of March, he attended the dramatic performance at Drury Lane Theatre, and ordered, as was then the custom with the leading men of London life, the play for the next evening. On leaving the theatre he assumed the disguise of a valet, and as the pretended servant of La Vigne, one of the French king's ministers, made his way to the coast embarked, and landed at Calais in safety on Sunday evening. Thence he made his way to Paris, where he

was warmly welcomed by the Pretender, and appointed his Secretary of State.

Meanwhile, Walpole had carried his impeachment in the House of Commons, and a bill was passed summoning him to deliver himself up to the officers of the law, or in default, attainting him of high treason. It passed the Lords with but little opposition, and received the royal assent without delay. Though thus deprived of his honours and estates, he was not actually reduced to poverty, having previously invested—in wise expectance of a rainy day—upwards of £13,000 in foreign securities.

Bolingbroke, however, found his new position one of great anxiety. The Chevalier, as he was called, he discovered to be a man of narrow mind and little heart, and so animated by an egregious belief in the affection of the British people for his dynasty, that he regarded the throne of England as already his own. His adherents were equally confident, and equally unfitted for great enterprises. "I find a multitude of people at work," writes Bolingbroke, "and every one doing what seemed good in his own eyes; no subordination, no order, no concert. The Jacobites have wrought one another up to look on the success of the present designs as infallible." In vain Bolingbroke, who better understood the real temper of the people, endeavoured to stop the wild enterprise in Scotland, which the Earl of Mar undertook in 1715, and which ended so disastrously for the hopes of the Jacobites. Had his advice been followed that unhappy campaign would never have taken place; but the Pretender, far from listening to his counsels, abruptly dismissed him from his secretaryship. Bolingbroke was not sorry to

be released from the cares and anxieties of a position so thankless, and when the Queen Dowager, more sensible than her son of his great abilities, begged him to retain the seals, he exclaimed, "No; tell them that I am now a free man, and may this arm rot off if, in their service, it ever direct a sword or pen again."

The court of St. Germain's now turned vindictively upon him, and with singular inconsistency impeached him as a traitor. But his practical abilities were still held in England in such honour that the English ministry readily took advantage of this circumstance to open negotiations with him through Lord Stair, then minister at Paris. Bolingbroke, thoroughly disgusted with the treatment he had undergone from the Jacobite court, was not unwilling to proffer his services to George I., but honourably refused to reveal any of the Pretender's secrets. This was not to the satisfaction, however, of the English cabinet, and the negotiation fell to the ground, the government, at the same time, raising Bolingbroke's father to the peerage (July 1716).

Lady Bolingbroke being now deceased, her husband availed himself of his liberty to marry the beautiful niece of Madame de Maintenon, the widowed Marchioness de Villette, who thereupon declared herself a Protestant (May 1720). She brought him as dowry the sum of £50,000 in the English funds, and £11,000 were straightway expended in bribing the Duchess of Kendal—the favourite mistress of George I.—to exercise her influence in procuring a reversal of the act of attainder. Through Walpole's vigorous opposition, all that at first could be procured was his restoration, in May 1723, to the peerage, which enabled him to quit his exile, and return to England. Two years later, an

act was passed which restored him to his estates and dignities, but Walpole prudently inserted a clause to render the intriguing statesman incapable of sitting in the House of Peers.

During his residence at Dawley, near Uxbridge, Bolingbroke was fain to occupy himself in literary pursuits and in attacks upon Walpole and his measures through the columns of the "Occasional Writer," and "The Craftsman." In the latter and once-distinguished journal appeared his clever "Letters on English History," under the *nom de plume* of Humphrey Oldcastle. His last political effort was a "Dissertation on Parties," full of vigorous writing and clever irony. Previous to its production he quitted England, and retired to Chanteloup, in Touraine, where he composed his able and eloquent "Letters on the Study and Use of History," and prepared, for the instruction of Frederick Prince of Wales, the admirable Utopian treatise which he entitled an "Idea of a Patriot King." At first, the essay was only intended for private circulation, and its author placed it in the hands of the poet Pope, that only a few copies might be printed. Pope, however, appears to have thought it possible that he might outlive Bolingbroke, and make some profit for himself out of the transaction. He accordingly made some alterations in the text, and printed 1500 copies, which, on his death in 1744, were duly discovered. Bolingbroke's indignation at the poet's unworthy conduct was very great. He collected the 1500 copies in a heap on his terrace at Battersea, and set fire to them. He then employed David Mallet to prepare a new edition, and a preface in which Pope's memory was severely attacked.

In 1742, Bolingbroke's father died, at the age of 90, and the statesman having succeeded to the patrimonial inheritance, finally quitted France, and took up his residence at the family seat at Battersea. Here he again amused himself with literary pursuits, and collected around him a gay and pleasant circle of wits, littérateurs, and statesmen. His wife died in 1750, and he himself was not fated long to survive her. A cancer in the face, aggravated by the treatment of a quack doctor, carried him off, in the 74th year of his age, on the 15th of December, 1751. He died as he had lived, a deist, rejecting the proffered services of a minister of the Church of England. His creed of religious philosophy, a showy but most unsubstantial one, is set forth with all Pope's splendour of diction and affluence of fancy in the "Essay of Man," but stripped of the poet's decorations, nothing more meagre or unsatisfactory can be imagined. In fact, Bolingbroke, as a philosopher, a statesman, and a writer, exhibits precisely the same distinctive qualifications, brilliancy without depth, courage without discretion, fancy without judgment, and vehemence without passion. He was a man of great parts, but little principle; a daring rather than an able statesman, and a showy speaker rather than a great orator. His social qualities were eminently attractive, and no one was better able to promote "the feast of reason and the flow of soul;" but our young English statesmen will do well to select for themselves as models men of greater moral worth and purer patriotism than him whom his contemporaries admired as Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE, EARL OF ORFORD.

(A.D. 1676—1745.)

"Go, see Sir Robert—
"See Sir Robert!—hum—
And never laugh for all my life to come?
Seen him I have, but in his happier hour
Of social pleasures, ill-exchang'd for power;
Seen him, uncumber'd with the venal tribe,
Smile without art, and win without a bribe."
POPE, *Epilogue to the Satires.*

ROBERT WALPOLE, afterwards Earl of Orford, was the grandson of Sir Edward Walpole, a distinguished loyalist, and the third son of Robert Walpole, Member of Parliament for Castle-Rising, in the county of Norfolk. He was born at his father's seat, at Houghton, in the same county, on the 26th of August, 1676.

His early education was received at a private seminary, at Massingham, not many miles from his father's residence, and was afterwards completed at Eton. Naturally of a slow and inactive disposition, it would seem that at first he was by no means one of those precocious scholars who are the pride and delight of their admiring masters. His disposition required a stimulus, and after a while found it in the rivalry of a public school, as well as in his father's constant warning, that he was a younger son to whom but a moderate share of

his fortune would necessarily fall. These *irritamenta* acted effectually on Walpole's mind, and we are told that before he left Eton he had so assiduously devoted himself to his studies as to have earned the reputation of a ripe scholar. He evinced a peculiar fondness throughout his career for classical literature, and in this respect, as in many others, resembled another great statesman and successful minister, Sir Robert Peel.

His father having destined him for the church—one of the customary refuges, in former days, of younger brothers—Walpole, in 1696, was admitted a scholar of King's College, Cambridge. The deaths of his two elder brothers, however, made a great change in his fortunes. He was now the heir of the house, and designed to support its ancient reputation. His father accordingly removed him from the university, and recalled him to his seat at Houghton, where his mornings were occupied in "bucolic pursuits," and his evenings in social pleasures, so that the love of study which had been awakened in his breast speedily passed away. In July 1700, he married Catherine, daughter of Sir John Shorter, Lord Mayor of London, and his father dying, became a country gentleman with the handsome income of £2000 per annum. He immediately entered public life as Member of Parliament for Castle-Rising, and soon attracted attention as an active member of the Whig party. In 1702 he was elected for King's Lynn, and in 1705 his services were rewarded by his appointment as a member of the council which assisted Prince George of Denmark in administering the duties of Lord High Admiral of England. His administrative abilities soon attracted the notice of the great Whig chiefs, and on the dismissal from office, in 1708, of Harley and St. John,

he was appointed to the secretaryship of war which had been held by the latter. In the Sacheverel trial he distinguished himself by his energy and tact, and aroused the special indignation of the High Church party. Nevertheless, his abilities were so highly esteemed by his opponents that on the success of the intrigues of Harley and Mrs. Masham, and the overthrow of the Whig cabinet, Harley proposed to him, in concert with Lord Chancellor Cowper, a coalition of forces. But Walpole had already decided to support the Protestant succession and the interests of the Elector of Hanover, and refused to ally himself with the Jacobite friends of the Court of St. Germain's.

The Tory party were not slow in outpouring upon him the vials of their wrath. They hated him for his zealous advocacy of the policy of the Marlborough faction, for the extraordinary influence he had acquired in the House of Commons, whose tone and temper he, like Sir Robert Peel, most accurately comprehended, and for the easy fluency with which he exposed their combinations and intrigues. A charge was brought against him by St. John, his persevering enemy, of having committed acts of corruption and a high breach of trust in his capacity as Secretary of War, and through the influence of the Tories he was declared guilty, though on most inadequate evidence, committed to the Tower, and expelled the House of Commons.

The Whigs now regarded him as a martyr in their cause, and in 1714 he was re-elected for King's Lynn without opposition. In the House he assumed an attitude of direct hostility to the ministers, and criticised their measures with successful severity. His energetic conduct in defence of Steele, the Whig pamphleteer,

largely increased his popularity. Steele had published a pamphlet, entitled "The Crisis," in which, with bold vehemence, he exposed the intrigues of the Tory ministers to overthrow the Protestant succession and re-establish the Stuart dynasty on the English throne. Steele was not only a Whig writer, but a Whig member of the House of Commons, and was there attacked in a furious manner by the Tory party. Walpole distinguished himself in Steele's defence. He pointed out the broad distinction between Steele the writer and Steele the member. If the author of "The Crisis" had violated the law, why not proceed against him in the courts of law? Why attack him in his capacity as a member of that House? "From what fatality does it arise," he added, "that what is written in favour of the Protestant succession, and what was countenanced by the late ministry, is deemed a libel by the present administration?" Steele, however, was pronounced guilty of a shameful calumny, and expelled the House by a majority of 245 votes to 152.

But though so great was the power of the Tory party in the Commons, it did not represent the feelings of the majority of the people of England, who were undoubtedly averse to the restoration of a Catholic king to the throne of a Protestant nation. Nor did the Tory chiefs act with either prudence or energy. They excited the animosity of the Nonconformists, a large and influential body, by the infamous Schism Act (see page 98), which, by the way, Walpole opposed with even more than his usual eloquence. Distracted by the open rivalries of Bolingbroke and Harley, balancing between the reckless daring of the former and the hesitating timidity of the latter, the Jacobites proved

themselves unequal to the crisis, and unable to cope with the energy and decision of the Whig chiefs. The favourable moment passed away, and the unexpected death of the queen overthrew for ever all reasonable prospect of a restoration of the Stuart dynasty.

On the accession of George I. Walpole was immediately rewarded for his zeal and fidelity to the Hanoverian cause with the lucrative situation of Paymaster of the Forces. He was afterwards chosen chairman of the committee appointed by the House of Commons to inquire into the treasonable practices of Bolingbroke and the Earl of Oxford, and by his tact in following up the evidence of their intrigues, and his skill in elucidating the details which bore most strongly against the late ministers, succeeded in procuring their impeachment, and the impeachment of the Duke of Ormond and Earl of Strafford.

His services in this delicate transaction, as well as the remarkable financial abilities which he was known to possess, pointed him out, in 1715, as the man best fitted to succeed the inefficient and incompetent Earl of Carlisle as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was a critical time. A rebellion in favour of the Pretender had broken out in Scotland, and the Jacobite party in England were jubilantly active. But the ministry acted with sufficient vigour, arresting and imprisoning the leading Jacobites, and awing into silence by the presence of a body of troops the head-quarters of disaffection, the University of Oxford. Meanwhile, jealousies broke out between the chiefs of the insurrection in Scotland. The Jacobite general, the Earl of Mar, proved himself thoroughly incompetent for his responsible post, and at

Preston and Sheriffmuir the insurgents met with severe reverses. The Chevalier himself arrived on the scene of action too late, and brought no good fortune with him. He was, indeed, the picture of dejection, and had no faith in the success of the cause for which he was suffering so many gallant men to shed their blood. Finally, the insurrection was crushed by the energy of General Cadogan. The Chevalier stole back to France. The scaffold, as usual, exacted its victims, though Walpole, being inclined by policy and nature to mercy, was as lenient as his duty to the throne permitted, and the Whig ministry was left in peace to devote themselves to the consolidation of the Hanoverian dynasty.

But it was not long before a violent schism broke out in the cabinet. Walpole and Townshend had incurred the resentment of the king by opposing the infamous exactions of his German favourites, and his own endeavours to embroil England in an European war in order to promote the interests of his beloved Electorate of Hanover. Sunderland, the Lord Privy Seal, a proud and haughty noble, also cherished against the two ministers a bitter personal resentment, and a cabal was accordingly formed to drive them from office. In 1717 it was strengthened by the accession of the able and intriguing Stanhope, and the final result was the dismissal of Townshend from office, immediately followed by the voluntary resignation of Walpole.

On the very day of his resignation, however, he gave a brilliant proof of his abilities as a financier by the introduction of a bill for the gradual diminution of the National Debt. His scheme, in many respects, was the prototype of Pitt's National Sinking Fund. Its carriage through the House was, of course, undertaken

by Walpole's successor, Stanhope, which induced Walpole to say that he hoped the bill would not be the worse for having two fathers. But Stanhope's financial abilities were by no means equal to Walpole's, and in the course of the ensuing debates, his blunders were constantly receiving correction from the ex-Chancellor. Stanhope retorted by charging Walpole with his sales of the reversions of sinecures, and the lavish provision he had made at the public expense for his brothers and relations.

In the following session Walpole undertook a settled opposition against the ministry, though most of its members had been formerly his colleagues, and inveighed against their measures with all the vigorous indignation of a disappointed patriot. He protested against the increase of a permanent military force, and condemned the unconstitutional practice of maintaining a standing army with vehement eloquence. The projected war with Spain he also denounced with far more justice, and in a purer, because more earnest spirit (A.D. 1717-8).

The session of 1719 was illustrated abroad by the victories of the British fleet, and at home by the defeat of the ministerial "Peerage Bill." This famous measure had its origin in the king's jealousy of his son, the Prince of Wales, and in the desire of the ministry to secure their present majority in the House of Peers. It proposed to "settle and limit the peerage in such a manner that the number of English peers should not be enlarged beyond six of the present number, which, upon failure of male issue, might be supplied by new creation; that instead of the sixteen elective peers of Scotland, twenty-five should be made hereditary on the part of that kingdom; and that this number, upon

failure of heirs male, should be supplied from the other members of the Scotch peerage." If this bill had been carried, it is evident that the Prince of Wales, on his accession to the throne, would have been precluded from rewarding his adherents, and strengthening his party by the creation of several new peers; and it is also evident that it amounted to a virtual exclusion from the honours of the peerage of most of the great English commoners. It was introduced in the House of Lords, which it passed without much difficulty (Nov. 30, 1719); but in the Commons Walpole organized against it a vigorous opposition, and attacked it in one of his ablest and most eloquent speeches. He protested that such a bill would make the peers more powerful than the throne, and close the door of honour to the best and bravest of the nation. Amongst the Romans the way to the temple of Fame was through the temple of Virtue, but that would never again be the case in England. "The effect of his speech on the House," says his biographer, Coxe, "exceeded the most sanguine expectations; it fixed those who had before been wavering and irresolute, brought over many who had been tempted by the speciousness of the measure to favour its introduction, and procured its rejection by a triumphant majority of 269 against 177." As Speaker Barlow said, the declamation of Walpole bore down before it all opposition.

It is always interesting and instructive to contrast the past with the present, and in many respects the contrast affords us ground for congratulation. Such a ministerial defeat as that we have recorded would nowadays lead, and very rightly, to a ministerial change; but in the easy days of George I. the ministers not only

accepted the defeat with complacency, but received among themselves their successful opponent. And it is curious to note that Walpole actually accepted the Paymastership of the Forces at the hands of the ministers whose policy he had impugned (A.D. 1720).

Meanwhile the Stanhope cabinet had brought to a successful close the war with Spain, and the country enjoyed a period of remarkable prosperity. The ministry was powerful in both Houses. The Jacobites had almost ceased to plot and forgotten to hope. A reconciliation between George I. and the Prince of Wales had been effected through the influence of Walpole. The sky was so brilliant with sunshine that no one apprehended an approaching storm. It came, however, very speedily; a storm which strewed the land with shattered fortunes and desolated homes. This was the notorious "South-Sea Bubble." A corporation founded by Harley in 1711, under the name of the South-Sea Company, proposed to buy up all the existing public securities, to reduce them into one aggregate stock, and by other specious schemes to extinguish, as they said, in six and twenty years, the entire National Debt. The acute intellect of Walpole penetrated the fallacy of the scheme, and it is to his credit that he strongly resisted it on its introduction to the House of Commons. But the members were infatuated by the brilliant prospects held out to them by the Directors of the Company, and passed the Bill which gave them the privileges they contended for, on the 2nd of April, 1720, by a majority of 172 against 55.

Immediately there arose such a fever of speculation as can only be paralleled by the railway mania of 1846. The stock of the South-Sea Company, valued six months before

at 130, suddenly rose to 1000! The directors passed a resolution to the effect that their dividend should not be less than *fifty per cent.* Every means was adopted to stimulate the public imagination, and from king to beggar the whole nation seemed to have turned stock-jobbers! But as suddenly as the scheme had risen, so suddenly it vanished into thin air. Those who were wise in their generation had sold out their stock betimes, and cleared by the ingenious process immense fortunes, so that the ruin fell, as in such cases it always falls, upon the ignorant poor, the orphan, the widow, the half-pay officer, who had hoped to increase their narrow incomes under the auspices of the South-Sea Company.

The panic soon became universal, and the king was compelled to return from Hanover, to restore by his presence the public confidence. Walpole was besought to employ his financial genius in remedying the evils caused by the crimes of corrupt adventurers and the follies of ignorant speculators. The directors of the company were prosecuted and their estates confiscated. Aislabie, Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had been a confederate in the iniquities of this nefarious scheme, was compelled to resign his post, to which Walpole succeeded, was expelled the House, and committed to the Tower. The Postmaster-General, the elder Craggs, committed suicide; his son, the Secretary of State, died of small-pox, aggravated by mental distress. The mania found a more innocent victim in the able minister Stanhope, who died in a fit of passion, in the House of Lords, after replying to a violent attack upon his character by the infamous Duke of Wharton. His death was shortly followed by that of the Earl of Sunderland

(April 19, 1721), and thus Walpole became the leading spirit of the ministry, and was soon officially its head as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. From hence until 1742, a period of about twenty-one years, he virtually administered the government of the country, and in no common degree contributed by the vigour and ability of his administration to establish the House of Hanover in security on the throne of Great Britain, and indirectly to found the present commercial prosperity of the empire.

Walpole's first object was the restoration of the public credit. His next was to subvert the designs of the Jacobites, whose hopes had been recently raised by the national troubles and discontent. Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, one of the boldest and ablest of the party, was banished from the kingdom, and various punishments dealt out to other conspirators. At the same time Walpole permitted his ancient rival, Lord Bolingbroke, to return to England, his pardon passing the great seal in May, 1723; but he carefully guarded against the reappearance of that ambitious intriguant in the political arena.

Walpole's energy, as well as his great parts and his undoubted fidelity to the Hanoverian dynasty, excited against him the bitter hatred of the Jacobites; and he appears, on several occasions, to have been in danger of falling a victim to the secret murderer. A curious story is told by his son, the letter-writing Horace:—"A day or two before the Bill of Pains and Penalties passed the House of Commons against the Bishop of Rochester, Mr. Johnstone, Sir Robert's zealous friend, advertised him to be circumspect, for three or four persons meditated to assassinate him as he should leave

the House that night. Sir Robert laughed, and forgot the notice. The morning after the debate Johnstone came to Sir Robert with a kind of good-natured insult, telling him that though he had scoffed his advice he had for once followed it, and by so doing preserved his life. Sir Robert understood not what he meant, and protested he had not given more credit than usual to his warning. 'Yes,' said Johnstone, 'but you did, for you did not come from the House last night in your own chariot. Walpole affirmed that he did; but his friend persisting in his asseveration Sir Robert called one of his footmen, who replied, 'I did call up your honour's carriage, but Colonel Churchill being with you, and his chariot drawing up first, your honour stepped into that, and your own came home empty.' Johnstone triumphing in his own veracity, and pushing the examination farther, Sir Robert's coachman recollected that as he left Palace-yard three men, much muffled, had looked into the empty chariot."

It is impossible for us, in the narrow limits to which we are necessarily restricted, and indeed it would be foreign to our design, to dwell upon the details of Sir Robert's administration during the one and twenty years of its duration. Its general character, however, has been admirably sketched by Lord Macaulay, and we need make no apology for transferring to our pages the words of the brilliant essayist.

"He had undoubtedly," he says, "great talents and great virtues. He was not, indeed, like the leaders of the party which opposed his government, a brilliant orator. He was not a profound scholar like Carteret, or a wit and a fine gentleman like Chesterfield. In all these respects his deficiencies were remarkable. His

literature consisted of a scrap or two of Horace, and an anecdote or two from the end of the Dictionary. His knowledge of history was so limited, that in the great debate on the Excise Bill he was forced to ask Attorney-general Yorke who Empson and Dudley were. His manners were a little too coarse and boisterous even for that age of Westerns and Sopehalls. When he ceased to talk of politics, he could talk of nothing but women; and he dilated on his favourite theme with a freedom which shocked even that plain-spoken generation, and which was quite unsuited to his age and station. The noisy revelry of his summer festivities at Houghton gave much scandal to grave people, and annually drove his kinsman and colleague, Lord Townshend, from the neighbouring mansion of Rainham.

"But, however ignorant Walpole might be of general history and of general literature, he was better acquainted than any man of his day with what it concerned him most to know, mankind, the English nation, the court, the House of Commons, and the Treasury. Of foreign affairs he knew little, but his judgment was so good that his little knowledge went very far. He was an excellent parliamentary debater, an excellent parliamentary tactician, an excellent man of business. No man ever brought more industry or more method to the transacting of affairs. No minister in his time did so much, yet no minister had so much leisure.

"That he practised corruption on a large scale is, we think, indisputable. But whether he deserves all the invectives which have been uttered against him on that account, may be questioned. No man ought to be severely censured for not being beyond his age in

virtue. Walpole governed by corruption, because in his time it was impossible to govern otherwise. He was himself incorruptible by money. His dominant passion was the love of power, and the heaviest charge which can be brought against him is that to this passion he never scrupled to sacrifice the interests of his country. The governing principle of his conduct was neither love of peace nor love of war, but love of power.

"The praise to which he is fairly entitled is this, that he understood the true interest of his country better than any of his contemporaries, and that he pursued that interest whenever it was not incompatible with the interest of his own intense and grasping ambition. It was only in matters of public moment that he shrank from agitation, and had recourse to compromise. In his contests for personal influence there was no timidity, no flinching. He would have all or none. Every member of the government who would not submit to his ascendency, was turned out or forced to resign. Liberal of everything else, he was avaricious of power. Cautious everywhere else, when power was at stake he had all the boldness of Richelieu or Chatham. He might easily have secured his authority, if he could have been induced to divide it with others. But he would not part with one fragment of it to purchase defenders for all the rest. The effect of this policy was, that he had able enemies and feeble allies. His most distinguished coadjutors left him one by one, and joined the ranks of the opposition. He faced the increasing array of his enemies with unbroken spirit, and thought it far better that they should attack his power than that they should share it."

The parts of the man must, however, have been very great, who could face, with unquailing courage, for twenty years, an opposition which, at one time or another, numbered in its ranks such antagonists as Argyle, Pulteney, Carteret, Bolingbroke, Wyndham, William Pitt, Chesterfield, and Lyttleton, supported out of doors by the satire of Pope, and Swift, and Gay, the humour of Arbuthnot, the ponderous eloquence of Johnson, and the facility of Glover, Akenside, and Thomson. To the last he fought the unequal battle with all the skill of a veteran chief. His strength had lain, for many years, in the divisions of the Opposition, and he had played one party against another with consummate dexterity. But when their hatred of each other was overcome by their mutual hatred of the powerful statesman who had so long defied them, Walpole found himself compelled to succumb before so irresistible an attack. Nevertheless, he fell with dignity. He yielded rather to the dismay and discouragement of his own followers than to the menaces of his foes, and with an earldom and security retired from the arena where he had played so brilliant a part to his gallery and gardens at Houghton.

Towards the close of the reign of George I. Walpole's hold of power became perceptibly loosened. Bolingbroke, his restless enemy, had obtained the favour of the Duchess of Kendal, the most rapacious of the many rapacious mistresses of George I., and his intrigues seemed likely to be crowned with success. He looked forward to a speedy restoration to office, while Walpole, aware of the mistress's influence over the royal mind, contemplated retiring to the House of Lords with a peerage, and was only dissuaded by the counsels of his steady friend the Princess of Wales. It was at this

critical juncture that the king, on his way to Hanover, was stricken to death by a fit of apoplexy (June 10th, 1727), and the shameful supremacy of the Duchess of Kendal passed away along with the ambitious hopes of the aspiring Bolingbroke.

The sovereign's unexpected death was instantly notified to Sir Robert by his brother, Lord Townshend, who had accompanied the king on his continental expedition, and Sir Robert, without delay, communicated the intelligence to his successor, and hailed him George II., King of England. The next step was to ask his Majesty who should draw up the royal speech to the Council. "Sir Spencer Compton," replied the king, thus implying Sir Robert's dismissal from office. But Sir Spencer was a worthy and honourable man, fully aware of his own incompetency for high office, was so far from wishing to supplant the premier, that, in his distress, it was to Sir Robert himself he had recourse to make the draught of the royal speech for him. "The new queen," says Horace Walpole, "a better judge than her husband of the capacities of the two candidates, and who had silently watched for a moment proper for overturning the new designations, did not lose a moment in observing to the king how prejudicial it would be to his affairs to prefer to the minister in possession a man in whose own judgment his predecessor was the fittest person to execute his office." From that moment unto Walpole's fall in 1772, he enjoyed, without an interval, the royal confidence; while by Queen Caroline, a woman of masculine mind and vigorous character, he was regarded with peculiar favour. The fact was, that Walpole, a good judge of men and things, had early discovered the king's sincere attachment to his

brilliant and devoted consort. He saw that the royal gallantries were ephemeral contrasted with his conjugal affection; that his mistresses had no real influence over him; that it was in the wife all real power centred, and to the wife therefore, from the first, he assiduously devoted himself. He was repaid by the queen's constant friendship and unremitting patronage. The day before she died she gave a strong mark of her conviction that he was the firmest supporter the king had. "As they two alone were standing by the queen's bed, she pathetically recommended, not the minister to the sovereign, but the master to the servant. Sir Robert was alarmed, and feared the recommendation would leave a fatal impression; but, a short time after, the king reading with Sir Robert some intercepted letters from Germany, which said that now the queen was gone, Sir Robert would have no protection, 'On the contrary,' said the king, 'you know she recommended me to you.' This marked the notice he had taken of the expression, and it was the only notice he ever took of it; nay, his majesty's grief was so excessive and so sincere that his kindness to his minister seemed to increase for the queen's sake."

We have already said that we cannot dwell upon the different acts of Walpole's administration — upon the famous Excise Bill, which excited so great an uproar in the nation that he was compelled to withdraw it—upon the war against Spain, into which he was forced contrary to his better judgment, and which eventually caused his downfall—or upon the long and gallant struggle which, in the decline of his power, he carried on with Carteret, Pulteney, Pitt, and a powerful opposition. Though advanced in years, he maintained the un-

equal contest with an infinity of spirit, vigour, and good humour. "Confound him," on one occasion, cried the unprincipled Whitehead, "how well he looks!" Even Pulteney, his bitterest opponent, could not but acknowledge his gallantry. "Sir," he said to him, "nobody can do what you can!" After a series of close divisions in the House of Commons, and weakened by the treachery of Lord Islay, in whom he had greatly trusted, Sir Robert at length resigned; but, while the public out of doors clamoured for his head, and denounced him as the cause of all the distresses in which the Spanish war had involved them, his power was still so great that he could obtain a peerage and a pension—the earldom of Orford, and £4000 per annum * (February, 1742). An impeachment was threatened, but it came to nothing. He retired in security, and still secretly exercised a powerful influence in the administration of affairs.

The Earl of Orford died at his house in Arlington Street, on the 18th of March, 1745, aged 69. He was buried at Houghton, in Norfolk. No monument, we believe, has ever been raised to the statesman who, for twenty years, guided the affairs of the empire with conspicuous success, and under whose rule it rapidly increased in wealth, prosperity, and power.

* He did not, however, finally obtain the royal grant until 1743.

WILLIAM PITT, EARL OF CHATHAM.

(A.D. 1703—1778.)

"In him Demosthenes was heard again,
Liberty taught him her Athenian strain;
She clothed him with authority and awe,
Spoke from his lips, and in his looks gave law.
His speech, his form, his action full of grace,
And all his country beaming in his face,
He stood, as some inimitable hand
Would strive to make a Paul or Tully stand.
No sycophant or slave that dar'd oppose
Her sacred cause, but trembled when he rose,
And every venal stickler for the yoke,
Felt himself crush'd at the first word he spoke.'

COWPER.

WILLIAM PITT, afterwards Earl of Chatham, was the son of Robert Pitt, a Cornish gentleman of good repute, and the grandson of a man who, in his day, made no inconsiderable figure, Thomas Pitt, for many years Governor of Madras. That was the age of "nabobs," when English adventurers contrived to secure beneath the burning skies of India such comfortable fortunes as bought them, in their later life, luxurious English homes, and the flatteries of English society. Thomas Pitt was no exception to the rule. He amassed great wealth during his tenure of office, and, moreover, became the lucky purchaser, at a very moderate rate, of a valuable diamond, which he sold, on his return to

England, to the Duke of Orleans, Regent of France, for two millions of livres. This costly jewel stills glows in the French coronation diadem, its brightest ornament. There were not wanting curious tongues to declare that the diamond was fraudulently obtained, and Pope immortalized the slander in a bitter couplet:—

> "Asleep and naked as an Indian lay,
> An *honest* factor stole the gem away;"

but there is satisfactory evidence that Pitt gave for it a reasonable sum.

On his return to England, Mr. Thomas Pitt became a person of great importance, having purchased with his lakhs of rupees several "rotten boroughs," and being thus enabled to command an amount of parliamentary influence which the minister of the day could not afford to disregard. He sat in four parliaments as member either for Old Sarum or Thirsk, but never acquired distinction as a speaker. Dying in 1726, he bequeathed the bulk of his estates to his eldest son, Robert Pitt, of Boconnoc, in the county of Cornwall.

William Pitt, so famous in our political history as the "Great Commoner," was born at Boconnoc, November 1708. Few anecdotes of his early years have been preserved, and we are left to conjecture whether in his boyhood he gave any indications of that powerful genius which was afterwards to awe a senate and convulse a world. Like most young men of family he was educated at Eton, whence he was removed, at the early age of seventeen, to Trinity College, Oxford. There, however, he does not appear to have acquired any special reputation for scholarship, and suffering severely from hereditary gout, he left the University without taking

a degree, that he might travel on the Continent for the benefit of his health. Returning to England, in 1727, he found his father dead, and as a younger son, enjoying but a limited income, he deemed it advisable to select a profession in which he might carve out his way to glory or fortune. The army appeared to him the most eligible, and accordingly he was gazetted to a cornetcy in the Royal Horse Blues.

But it was not the fame of the conqueror or the tactician that William Pitt was destined to acquire. Confined, indeed, to the narrow routine of a soldier's life, it is improbable that his impetuous genius could have found sufficient space for development, or suitable opportunity for display. Pitt was born to lead rather than to serve, and had he remained a dragoon, would undoubtedly have been the hero of a thousand disputes with his superiors in command. Happily for him, and it may be said without exaggeration, for his country, his elder brother, Thomas, in the election of 1734, was chosen representative both for Old Sarum and Okehampton. When Parliament assembled in 1735, Thomas Pitt elected to sit for the Devonshire borough, and his brother William was quietly posted to the seat thus made vacant at Sarum.

At this period the ministry, as our preceding sketch has shown, was directed by Sir Robert Walpole, who, "loving power so much that he would not endure a rival," had dismissed or offended every able coadjutor, and, himself a host, virtually supported on his own shoulders the whole burthen of government. But as his former adherents, disgusted by his greed of sway, one by one withdrew from his side, a formidable opposition arose, at whose head stood Pulteney, the most

brilliant debater, and skilful parliamentary tactician of his time. Daily was this phalanx recruited by the "rising talent" of the nation, because this "rising talent" very well knew that Walpole allowed to his rank and file no opportunity of obtaining distinction. It was natural, therefore, that among its recruits would be the aspiring "cornet of dragoons," now member for Thirsk; but little did Pulteney think that in this youthful adherent was fermenting an ambition greater than his own, and slumbered powers which would distinguish him as the first statesman of his age.

Without entering into any detailed account of the political situation of the period, it is necessary to explain that Walpole's government was supported by the king and Queen Caroline, while the heir apparent, Frederick, Prince of Wales, openly encouraged the schemes and projects of the opposition. When, therefore, Prince Frederick was married (April 1736) to the Princess of Saxe-Gotha, Walpole declined to move in the House the usual address of congratulation; he knew too well the king's hatred of his son, and that such a measure would only excite the royal indignation. But the opposition was only the more resolved to bring forward an address: though unsuccessful, its leaders had the pleasure of embarrassing Walpole and annoying the king.

The motion was made by Pulteney, and supported by Pitt in his "maiden speech." His efforts were loudly applauded, and his command of language, his rare personal gifts, and admirable elocution, at once attracted the attention of the House.

"His figure," says Lord Macaulay, "when he first appeared in Parliament, was strikingly graceful and

commanding, his features high and noble, his face full of fire. His voice, even when it sank to a whisper, was heard to the remotest benches, and when he strained it to its full extent, the sound rose like the swell of the organ of a great cathedral, shook the house with its peal, and was heard through lobbies and down staircases to the Court of Requests and the precincts of Westminster Hall. He cultivated all these eminent advantages with the most assiduous care. His action is described by a very malignant observer as equal to that of Garrick. His play of countenance was wonderful; he frequently disconcerted a hostile orator by a single glance of indignation or scorn. Every tone, from the impassioned cry to the thrilling aside, was perfectly at his command. It is by no means improbable that the pains which he took to improve his great personal advantages had, in some respects, a prejudicial operation, and tended to nourish in him that passion for theatrical effect which was one of the most conspicuous blemishes in his character."

Pitt's oratory was that of a rhetorician. He possessed no logical powers; as a debater he was excelled by many men of inferior parts; he was not apt in reply, or in the exposure of the weak points of an opponent's argument. But in bursts of scorn and indignation, in eloquent appeals to the passions, in torrents of seathing invective, in displays of enthusiastic declamation he has never been surpassed, perhaps never equalled. But it was his *earnestness*, we fancy, that moved his audience most. Whether blighting a rival with the loftiest contempt, or indulging his patriotism in utterances of the most elevated tone, Pitt's heart was in it, and his hearers believed in him because he believed in himself.

Even in the earlier years of his parliamentary career the force, sincerity, and keenness of his invective pierced through the cool indifference of Walpole, who was wont to speak of him as that "terrible cornet of dragoons."

Walpole, however, was not the man to submit impassively to the assaults of any individual whom he could either cajole by a bribe or silence through fear. Pitt could not be bought, and must, therefore, be punished. He was dismissed from his cornetcy. But the daring orator found an immediate compensation in the post of Groom of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales, and thus sheltered by the heir-apparent, renewed his attacks upon the ministry with increased vigour. The iniquitous dispute with Spain, fomented by Pulteney and his adherents as a means of overthrowing Walpole, supplied Pitt with admirable opportunities for the display of his impassioned rhetoric. But to the disgust of the opposition the astute minister, though known to be in his heart a warm advocate of peace, yielded to the clamour raised by an ignorant multitude, and declared war against Spain. Never was war made on slighter grounds; never did the end less justify the means. Walpole was speedily punished for his complicity in so unrighteous a measure. At first a gleam of success was thrown on his administration by Admiral Vernon's capture of Porto-Bello. But Vernon was the favourite of the mob, and when his attack on Carthagena disastrously failed, it was not the incapacity of the Admiral, but the criminal weakness of the Minister that aroused the popular indignation. Walpole found the power he had so long enjoyed slipping from his hands, and when a new Parliament met in 1742, it was

discovered that his ministry was in a minority. He accordingly resigned, after a brave, but unavailing struggle.

An effort was now made by the Duke of Newcastle and Lord Hardwicke to construct a Whig administration, and a negotiation was opened with the chiefs of the so-called "patriots" for that purpose. Meanwhile, Pitt and his friends made secret overtures to Walpole that they would shield him from impeachment if he exerted his influence with the king in their favour. The intrigue failed, because Walpole clearly perceived that they could avail him nothing as friends or foes, except as their leaders Pulteney and Carteret decided.

In the new government—the Pelham administration—which through good and evil fortune maintained itself in power for nine years, no place was found for Pitt, and, as Lord Macaulay says, since he was not invited to become a placeman, he stuck firmly to his old trade of patriot. Against Walpole he turned with all the vehemence of disappointed ambition. "He spoke with great energy and ability in favour of the most unjust and violent propositions which the enemies of the fallen minister could invent. He urged the House of Commons to appoint a secret tribunal for the purpose of investigating the conduct of the late First Lord of the Treasury. This was done. The great majority of the inquisitors were notoriously hostile to the accused statesman; yet they were compelled to own they could find no fault in him. They, therefore, called for new powers, for a bill of indemnity to witnesses, or, in plain words, for a bill to reward all who might give evidence, true or false, against the Earl of Orford. This bill Pitt supported." Fortunately it was rejected by the Upper

House, and Walpole was permitted to retire into private life without further molestation.

Pitt now directed the artillery of his invective against Carteret, and acquired great popularity by his spirited attacks on the partiality exhibited by George II. for his snug little Electorate at Hanover. He especially condemned the payment of Hanoverian troops with the money wrung from the suffering tax-payers of England. His conduct in this respect did not pass without reward. The Duchess of Marlborough, the haughty Sarah Jennings, who was undeniably a good hater, who hated George II., and Lady Sandon, and Walpole, and Carteret, died in October, 1744, and left by her will a legacy of £10,000 to Pitt for "the noble defence he had made of the laws of England, and to prevent the ruin of his country."

Alas, for the vanity of human expectations! A month later, and the patriot had become a courtier! It is true that his advances were not at first very successful, for the king bitterly resented his attack on the much-loved Hanoverian troopers; but the two Pelhams (the Duke of Newcastle and his brother), who had contrived to intrigue Carteret out of the premiership, and get the administration into their own hands, held out the strongest hopes to Pitt that the royal wrath would speedily be mitigated.

There was, indeed, one strong link of friendship between Pitt and the Pelhams. They mutually hated the eloquent and able Carteret, now raised to the House of Lords as Earl Granville. The Pelhams were keenly aware of the influence which that bold and audacious statesman still exercised, in secret, upon the royal mind, and knew that he was waiting for a favourable oppor-

tunity to drive them from power. On the other hand, their parliamentary interest was overwhelming. They resolved, therefore, at the earliest possible moment, to bring their rivalries to the issue of open battle, caring little how the interests of the nation suffered while they were thus engaged in the meanest and most shameless of intrigues.

For while the ministers of the Crown were plotting upon the back stairs and in the ante-chambers of the palace, that Crown was tottering on the brow of the Hanoverian king. The Pretender, Prince Charles Edward, was advancing at the head of a victorious army in a career of triumph which seemed destined to terminate only at St. James's. No preparations were made for a vigorous resistance. Granville, out of enmity to the Pelhams, pretended that the rebellion was a thing of nought. He and his faction persisted, says Horace Walpole, in persuading the king that it was an affair of no consequence, while the Duke of Newcastle was secretly delighted when the rebels made any progress, as he was furnished with fresh confutations of Lord Granville's assertion. The enemy was at the gates of the Capitol, and still the geese indulged in idle cackle!

It was in these perilous circumstances that the Pelhams resolved upon a ministerial crisis, with the ostensible view of placing Pitt, whom, indeed, they feared and whose help they needed, in office, but also with the secret determination of ruining their enemy, Granville. "To them," says Earl Stanhope, "the unquelled rebellion appeared, not as a motive of forbearance, but only as a favourable opportunity for pushing their pretensions." The king's resentment, however, still flamed fiercely against the plain-speaking Pitt, and fresh fuel

was cast upon the fire by Lord Bath and Earl Granville. The Pelhams and their followers immediately sent in their resignations, which the king gladly accepted, and placed the task of forming a new administration in the hands of the two conspirators. "Thus far," says Horace Walpole, "all went on swimmingly; they had only forgot one little point, which was to secure a majority in both Houses." They soon discovered that their attempt was a hopeless one, and owning their discomfiture to the king, he recalled the Pelhams to power, and consented to Pitt being rewarded with the office, a lucrative one, of Vice-Treasurer of Ireland, and afterwards of Paymaster of the Forces.

Pitt, from a quarrelsome patriot, was suddenly transformed into a peaceable placeman. He had scarcely been a week in office before he recanted his old principles, and both spoke and voted in favour of the payment of 18,000 Hanoverian auxiliaries. His speech was able and eloquent, and especially pleased his new allies. "Mr. Pitt spoke so well," wrote Newcastle to the Duke of Cumberland, "that the Premier (Henry Pelham) told me he had the dignity of Sir William Wyndham, the wit of Mr. Pulteney, and the knowledge and judgment of Sir Robert Walpole; in short, he said all that was right for the king, kind and respectful for the old corps, and resolute and contemptuous of the Tory opposition."

For some years the ministry steered the ship of the State in a summer sea. There had ceased to be an opposition, and the fiery eloquence of Pitt was now employed in the defence, and not in the attack, of ministerial measures. "He silently acquiesced in that very system of continental measures which he had con-

demned. He ceased to talk disrespectfully about Hanover. He did not object to the treaty with Spain, though that treaty left us exactly where he had been when he uttered his spirit-stirring harangues against the policy of Walpole. Now and then glimpses of his former self appeared; but they were few and transient. Pelham knew with whom he had to deal, and felt that an ally so little used to control, and so capable of inflicting injury, might well be indulged in an occasional fit of waywardness." This halcyon period terminated with the death of the premier, Henry Pelham, in March, 1754. "He could not have died," says Horace Walpole, "at a more critical time. As everything was settled by his life, so everything is thrown into confusion by his death; the difficulty of naming, or who should name the successor, is almost insurmountable." Three candidates appeared for the power and place thus vacated: Murray, afterwards so famous as the Earl of Mansfield, Henry Fox, father of the more celebrated Charles James Fox, and Pitt. But neither was successful. The Duke of Newcastle became head of the new administration as First Lord of the Treasury, and resolved to centre all power in himself; he entrusted the leadership of the Commons to an incapable, named Sir Thomas Robinson. "Sir Thomas Robinson lead us!" exclaimed Pitt to Fox—the two rivals being now united by a common hatred—"The duke might as well send his jack-boot to lead us!"

The attack they now commenced upon that unfortunate secretary, and upon their leader, the duke, was conducted with so much vigour and ability, that the duke felt it was necessary to dismiss or promote his mutinous subordinates. Availing himself of the secret

rivalry which he knew to exist between Pitt and Fox, and dreading the impetuous will and superior genius of the former, he offered the latter a seat in the cabinet upon condition that he broke his connection with Pitt, and rendered the administration a hearty support. Fox accepted the terms, and assisted Robinson in his management of the Commons. But a time was coming when something more than decorous respectability and parliamentary talent would be needed by the country. With prescient eye, Pitt looked forward to the coming perils, and with confident genius felt that he alone could grapple with them.

Between England and France a smothered war had long existed in America and India, and towards the close of the year 1755, it became evident that open hostilities could not much longer be avoided. Our English cruisers captured French merchantmen in the West Indian seas, and a French army in America cut off General Braddock's expedition. George II., however, was far more anxious to provide for the safety of his Electorate of Hanover than the honour of his kingdom of England, and Newcastle, as long as he could retain power and place, was prepared to sacrifice everything else to humour his royal master. Treaties were therefore concluded with several small German princes for the employment at an enormous expense of German troops, while a large subsidy was promised to Russia to secure her co-operation in case of an attack by Prussia upon the Hanoverian electorate.

When these measures became public, a strong indignation pervaded all England. Even Newcastle's own subordinates expressed their dissatisfaction in the warmest terms. Mr. Legge, his chancellor of the exchequer,

refused to sign the treasury warrant for the Hessian subsidy; and the Duke of Devonshire, the Speaker, and others declared strongly against the projected treaties. Newcastle was at a loss for coadjutors to defend his measures in the House of Commons. He implored Pitt to come to his aid. Pitt in reply expressed his willingness to support the Hessian treaty, as the king took a strong personal interest in it, but that he would not defend "a system of subsidies" Fox was therefore promoted into Sir Thomas Robinson's place, and the entire management of the House of Commons entrusted to him. On the other hand, a strong opposition against the ministry was formed, and Pitt, the most brilliant orator of the age, placed himself at its head.

Parliament met on Thursday, November 6th, and the struggle immediately commenced. An animated picture of the important debate which ensued, a debate which had no slight influence on the fortunes of England, is given by Horace Walpole. He writes to his friend Conway, thus:—

"The engagement was not more decisive than long—we sat till within a quarter of five in the morning; an uninterrupted serious debate from before two. Mr. Fox was extremely fatigued, and did little. George Grenville's was very fine, and much beyond himself, and very pathetic. The Attorney-General [Murray] in the same style, and very artful, was still finer. Then there was a young Mr. Hamilton ['Single-speech Hamilton'] who spoke for the first time, and was at once perfection; his speech was set, and full of antithesis, but these antitheses were full of argument; indeed, his speech was the most argumentative of the whole day, and he broke

through the regularity of his own composition, answered other people, and fell into his own track again with the greatest ease. His figure is advantageous, his voice strong and clear, his manner spirited, and the whole with the ease of an established speaker. You will ask, What could be beyond this? Nothing, but what was beyond what ever was, and that was Pitt! He spoke, at past one, for an hour and thirty-five minutes: there was more humour, wit, vivacity, finer language, more boldness, in short, more astonishing perfections, than even you, who are used to him, can conceive. . . . The most admired part was a comparison he drew of the two parts, Fox and Newcastle, of the new administration, to the conflux of the Rhone and the Saone; 'the latter a gentle, feeble, languid stream, languid but not deep; the other a boisterous and overbearing torrent; but they join at last, and long may they continue united to the comfort of each other, and to the glory, honour, and happiness of this nation!'" The ministers, however, carried their point by a majority of 311 to 105, and Pitt and Legge were immediately dismissed from their offices.

Pitt's eloquence extorted from Walpole the following imitative eulogium:—

> "Three orators, in distant ages born,
> Greece, Italy, and England did adorn;
> The first in loftiness of thought surpass'd,
> The next in language, but in both the last:
> The power of Nature could no farther go;
> To make a third she joined the former two."

Though unsuccessful in their first attack, the opposition bated not one jot of heart or hope, and continued its powerful assaults upon the weak and incapable

ministry, while Pitt "rode in the whirlwind and directed the storm" with a genius and an energy which made him the most popular man in England. Nor after Parliament was prorogued did his influence diminish. England found herself in the most imminent peril, and looked to Pitt to rescue her. Everywhere, indeed, her arms were unsuccessful; but the loss of Minorca was felt as the severest and most disgraceful blow. Apprehensions of a French invasion perturbed both court and city. In vain Newcastle attempted to quiet the public indignation by the sacrifice of Admiral Byng for a mere error of judgment. From every county, from every great town, went up strongly-worded addresses to the throne demanding an inquiry into the causes of the late disasters.

In this perplexity, Fox, who had long been discontented with his position, threw up his office, and Newcastle found himself called upon to face the gathering storm alone. He endeavoured to obtain the help of his most powerful opponent, Pitt; but the great orator knew his strength, and refused to take any part in an administration which included Newcastle. As the latter's parliamentary interest was immense, his friends advised him to carry on the government in opposition both to Pitt and Fox; but he felt himself unable to face two such formidable foes, and, in a fit of apprehension, resigned his office. The king then charged Fox to construct a ministry in concert with Pitt; but again the orator, who had resented Fox's previous desertion of him, was found impracticable. The king, in this embroglio, had recourse to the Duke of Devonshire, and a government was at length composed in which Pitt became Secretary of State and leader of the House

of Commons, the Duke of Devonshire took the Treasury, Legge became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord Temple, Pitt's brother-in-law, First Lord of the Admiralty.

This administration, however, lasted but five months. It was without a majority in Parliament, and was secretly plotted against by the king. It is only remarkable for having been in power when the judicial murder of Admiral Byng was accomplished (March). But his blood does not lie at Pitt's door. Both in Parliament and at Court he manfully pleaded for the unfortunate seaman's pardon. The king was resolved that he should suffer. "The House of Commons, sire," said Pitt, "seems inclined to mercy." "Sir," retorted the king, "you have taught me to look for the sense of my people in other places than the House of Commons."

As early as March the 17th, Horace Walpole writes:—"The new ministers are well weary of their situation; without credit at court, without influence in the House of Commons, undermined everywhere, I believe they are too sensible not to desire to be delivered of their burthen, which those who increase yet dare to take on themselves. Mr. Pitt's health is as bad as his situation." The king's antagonism was not concealed. He disliked Pitt, but he perfectly hated Temple. "Pitt," he said, "made him long speeches, which probably might be very fine, but were greatly beyond his comprehension, and that his letters were affected, formal, and pedantic; but as to Temple, he was so disagreeable a fellow, there was no bearing him." On the 5th of April Temple was dismissed; on the 6th, Pitt; and the Duke of Newcastle was once more summoned to form a government.

But if the king could dismiss Pitt from office he could not deprive him of his popularity. The news of his downfall again convulsed the country. The stocks fell. The freedom of the city of London, in a gold box, was presented to the disgraced minister, and so many other great towns followed the example that, as Lady Hervey said, for some weeks "it rained gold boxes." A neat epigram was circulated on the occasion of the corporation of Bath falling in with the prevalent fashion :—

TO THE NYMPH OF BATH.

"Mistaken nymph, thy gifts withhold,
Pitt's virtuous soul despises gold ;
Grant him thy boon peculiar, health ;
He'll guard, not covet, Britain's wealth."

In fact, Pitt's popularity at this time reached its zenith. Ladies of rank gave as a toast, "The three P's—Peace, Plenty, and Pitt," or found an agreeable alliteration in Wonder, Wisdom, War, and Wit. Newcastle felt that he was a dangerous enemy, but could prove a powerful friend. He neither knew how to reign with him or without him. Without him the administration was perilously insecure, and liable to a sudden overthrow; with him his mean little soul cowered before the superior genius of the man. But the two were necessary to one another. Newcastle possessed parliamentary influence, Pitt influence with the people. Each yielded something of his pretensions, and after a brief interval of plots and intrigues, to the anger and dismay of the king, to the astonishment of the nation, a coalition was formed between the two statesmen. It was useless for the king to resist, and

all at once, out of the confusion in which parties had for some time been rising, falling, meeting, separating, arose a government as potent at home as that of Pelham, as successful abroad as that of Godolphin. Pitt took the lead of the House of Commons, and the direction of the war and foreign policy. Newcastle became First Lord of the Treasury, and managed the "votes and consciences" of Parliament. Fox was quieted with the lucrative office of Paymaster to the Forces (June, 1757).

The influence of the energy and determination of Pitt soon became apparent. It was not that all his schemes were successful, or all his projects well-conceived, but that his vigour, activity, and resolution made themselves everywhere manifest, and infused fresh life into each department of the state. Every young officer in both services felt that an eye was upon him quick to detect a shortcoming, or recognize an act of daring; and as before men attempted too little, now they attempted so much that they taught themselves how to conquer. Triumph after triumph shed fresh lustre on the arms of England. Both by land and by sea she asserted her supremacy, and did justice to her ancient fame. The island of Cape Breton was reduced, and the large fleet with which the French hoped to defend their American possessions destroyed (July 1758). The captured standards were borne through the city in triumph, and hung up at St. Paul's. London and the great towns broke out into mad huzzas, and the Parliament voted supplies of twelve million —then an extraordinary sum—without a word of opposition. "The unanimity in the House of Commons in voting such a sum," says Lord Chesterfield.

"and such forces, both by sea and land, is not less astonishing. This is Mr. Pitt's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

The year 1759 was one brilliant series of victories It opened with the capture of Goree, which was followed by the reduction of Guadaloupe. Havre de Grace was bombarded by Admiral Hawke. De la Clue's French fleet was defeated by Boscawen off Cape Lagos.* English troops contributed in no slight measure to the victory of Minden. Amherst captured Ticonderoga, and finally, Wolfe, by the great battle on the Heights of Abraham, annihilated French dominion in America. "The bells," wrote Walpole, "are worn threadbare with ringing for victories. The king is overwhelmed with addresses. He told the city of London that all was owing to *unanimity*, but I think he should have said to *unmanimity*, for it were shameful to ascribe our brilliancy to anything but Mr. Pitt."

The year closed with Hawke's signal victory over the Brest fleet, under Conflans (November 20), when two French ships of the line struck, four were destroyed, and the rest compelled to take refuge in the river Vilaine. Thus, from the depths of degradation, the genius and enterprise of Pitt had raised the empire to a height of glory and military power which it had not reached since the days of Marlborough.

Similar successes distinguished the following year. Everywhere the British flag floated victoriously. In America and in India the persevering "islanders"

* "Admiral Boscawen has made free with the coast of Portugal, and used it to make a bonfire of the French fleet." When Mr. Pitt was told of this infraction of a neutral territory, he replied, "It is very true, but they are burned."

fully established themselves, and founded, both in the eastern and western worlds, empires of vast extent, unparalleled splendour, and apparent durability. Meanwhile, trade at home was prosperous, and commerce was nursing into vigorous life many of those great commercial emporia upon whose wealth and resources we now not unjustly pride ourselves. It was thus that Pitt deserved the eulogium inscribed on his monument in Guildhall by the grateful citizens of London; only under an administration so able and resolute could "commerce be united with and made to flourish by war." Yet we must not allow ourselves to be blinded by the glare of his glory to his signal extravagances as a minister, nor to forget that England paid a heavy reckoning at a later period for all this ostentation of victory and splendour of conquest. It was Pitt's great merit that he believed in his country, that, like the old Roman, he never despaired of the commonwealth. But, as it has been remarked, he appears to have been, as a minister, incapable of able combinations or profound tactics. He had the wealth and resources of a great nation to support him, and attempting much he necessarily accomplished much. His failures were concealed by the brilliancy of his successes. But if he was extravagant in his designs he carried them out with ardour, and his ardour set the whole empire on fire. He roused it from its lethargy and self-abandonment. He taught it to dare everything, and to fear nothing. Like the sun he called forth life from wastes where death had hitherto seemed to slumber.

George II. died on the 25th October, 1760. His reign had opened in shadow, but it closed in sunshine. As he lay in his cabinet, stricken with apoplexy, the

cannon roared and the drums rattled the loud hoarse song of victory. But not so much to the king as to the minister went up this pæan of triumph. For Pitt's situation at this epoch—we cannot refrain from quoting Lord Macaulay's picturesque language—was "the most enviable ever occupied by any public man in English history. He had conciliated the king, he domineered over the House of Commons, he was adored by the people, he was admired by all Europe. He was the first Englishman of his time, and he had made England the first country in the world. The Great Commoner, the name by which he was often designated, might look down with scorn on coronets and garters. The nation was drunk with joy and pride. The Parliament was as quiet as it had been under Pelham. Whigs and Tories, Churchmen and Puritans, spoke with equal reverence of the constitution, and with equal enthusiasm of the talents, virtues, and services of the minister."

The sun had now reached its zenith, and henceforth was to decline, although its setting splendour was not unworthy of its meridian glory. When George III. came to the throne, he brought with him an influence into the royal cabinet which undermined Pitt's influence in the council. This was the Earl of Bute, a man of narrow mind and cold heart, who had set before his own eyes and those of the young and ignorant sovereign the glittering vision of an almost absolute monarchy, of which he himself was to be the ruling and guiding spirit. It was necessary to commence with overthrowing Pitt. Nor was the task so difficult as it seemed. Dissensions had begun to show themselves in the ministry. Some of Pitt's colleagues

were offended by his haughty and imperious manner; others objected to his policy as burdening the country with an overwhelming debt. Of these the ablest and most determined was Pitt's own brother-in-law, George Grenville, who regarded with apprehension the extent of England's engagements.

The struggle soon came. France, worn out and exhausted, bankrupt in honour and resources, sued for peace, and Pitt, satisfied with the terms she offered, was disposed to carry on the necessary negotiations, only stipulating that England should be left free to continue her aid to her old ally, the king of Prussia, then involved in a German war. Bute, who knew that the secret of Pitt's power was his success as a war minister, desired to make peace with France on easier terms. At this time it became known to the energetic statesman that Spain and France had secretly concluded an offensive and defensive alliance, known as the "Family Compact," and that an open declaration of war on the part of Spain was only deferred until the arrival of her treasure-fleet from the mines of Mexico and Peru. Enraged at this perfidy, and comprehending the dangers with which this alliance menaced England, Pitt immediately proposed to his colleagues that war should instantly be declared against Spain; that her colonial possessions, Cuba and the Philippines, should be attacked by suitable expeditions, and a squadron despatched to intercept her American galleons. His energy found no corresponding spirit in the Cabinet. Bute seized the occasion as a fortunate one for the success of his conspiracy, and, aided by Grenville, succeeded in securing the rejection of Pitt's vigorous and well-devised measures. Pitt and his brother-in-law, Temple, immediately resigned office.

Either to purchase the public applause by affecting a great sense of the value of the minister's services, or else in the hope of aiming a blow at his popularity by connecting his name with the opprobrium of a pension, Bute and the young king did not suffer Pitt to retire without loading him with favours. For himself personally, indeed, he was unwilling to receive anything, but was finally persuaded to accept for his wife a peerage in her own right, and for himself a pension of £3000 a year for three lives. If the court designed by these rewards to lower him in the public estimation, the court signally failed. After a temporary paroxysm of abuse, the Great Commoner still remained the favourite of the nation All the principal towns poured in upon him addresses of sympathy; and on Lord Mayor's Day the king, who dined at Guildhall, had the mortification to find himself comparatively unnoticed, while every voice was raised for Pitt, and every eye was fixed upon him. "The streets, the balconies, the chimney-tops burst into a roar of delight as his chariot passed by. The ladies waved their handkerchiefs from the windows; the common people clung to the wheels, shook hands with the footmen, and even kissed the horses. When he entered Guildhall he was welcomed by loud huzzas and clapping of hands, in which the very magistrates of the city joined."

Nor was Pitt's popularity lessened when the truth of his predictions became manifest. War was declared against Spain, and the very enterprises on which the ministry resolved were those which he had suggested. It was too late to intercept the immense treasures of the American fleet, but Martinico and Havannah and Manilla surrendered to the British arms. Pitt calmly

pointed out these remarkable confirmations of his views, but entered into no violent opposition against either Bute or Grenville. "This is no season," he said, "for altercation and recrimination. A day has arrived when every Englishman should stand forth for his country. Arm the whole; be one people; forget everything but the public. I set you the example. Harassed by slanderers, sinking under pain and disease, for the public I forget both my wrongs and my infirmities!" He had his reward, for while Bute held the reins of government with an incapable hand, and filled every office with needy Scotch adventurers, the eyes of the nation were longingly fixed upon Pitt as the one noble, ardent, self-denying patriot, to whose genius England in her extremity might again be glad to have recourse.

In February 1763, the Bute administration concluded the peace of Paris, by which hostilities with France and Spain were terminated in no dishonourable nor disadvantageous manner. But England was drunk with the long series of victories to which Pitt had accustomed her, and received the new-made peace with a burst of violent indignation. Bute quailed before it, and though a large and servile majority in the Commons had approved the conditions, which, indeed, greatly added to England's power and influence, he resigned. He preferred to rule in secret as the hidden influence behind the throne than to endure the pains and suffer the penalties of office. At the same time his chief colleague, Henry Fox, retired to the House of Lords as Baron Holland, and George Grenville, Pitt's able brother-in-law, became Chancellor of the Exchequer and First Lord of the Treasury.

Such an administration now came into power as England had never before seen, and such, as most cer-

tainly, neither Bute nor his sovereign had deemed possible. They had looked upon Grenville as one well adapted to be the willing tool of the court. No sooner did he feel securely seated in office than he proved himself independent both of the court and the people. He defied Lord Bute and his creatures; he enraged the people by a weak and wicked prosecution of John Wilkes for the publication of the famous "No. 45" of the "North Briton." He caused Wilkes to be arrested under a general warrant, that is, a blank warrant signed by a Secretary of State, into which any names could at pleasure be inserted, but had the mortification to find general warrants condemned as illegal by the Court of Common Pleas, and Wilkes elevated into a popular hero at the government's expense. The king, weary of his tyrannical manner and his interference with his Scotch favourites, endeavoured to open a negotiation with Pitt. Pitt refused to take office unless supported by his friends the chiefs of the Whig party, and the king was resolute never to make terms with the members of that detested connection. The negotiation, therefore, dropped; and Grenville seemed firmer in power than ever. Accordingly he rioted in arrogance; his language towards his sovereign was rudely violent; his persecution of his opponents grew daily less restrained. Pitt lay ill of the gout at his pleasant villa at Hayes; and during the session of 1765 he does not appear to have mingled once in the debates of Parliament. But he was "conspicuous by his absence." Never was his influence greater with his country than during this year of silent retirement. Relieved from the presence of so potent a magician, Grenville proceeded unchecked in his career of unwise oppression.

It was at this period that he brought forward the memorable Act for the imposition of Stamp Duties in the American colonies, and sowed the seeds of that revolution which, after years of blood and woe, terminated in the establishment of the United States. Grenville did not perceive that "to lay taxes at Westminster on New England and New York was a course opposed, not indeed to the letter of the Statute-book, nor to any decision contained in the Term reports, but to the principles of good government, and to the spirit of the constitution." He did not feel that ten times the calculated produce of the stamp tax were not worth even a temporary quarrel between the colonies and the mother country. But it was an insult openly levelled at the king's own mother, whom he proposed to incapacitate from acting in a Regency, should the course of events render one necessary, that inflamed against him the royal resentment. The king sent for his uncle, William, Duke of Cumberland—a man who has scarcely received justice at the hands of our English historians—and confided to him his troubles. The duke was sagacious, honourable, and intrepid. He saw that it was requisite to form a strong Whig administration to rescue both the king and the country from the absolute thraldom in which they laboured. He himself went down to Hayes, Pitt's villa—the hero of Culloden, as Walpole expresses it, to the conqueror of Canada—and implored the great statesman to put aside his private griefs, and restore confidence to the country by his presence in the king's councils. But Pitt's evil genius, his brother-in-law, Earl Temple, who exercised over his lofty mind a secret but considerable influence, contrived to stimulate him to a refusal of the duke's most gracious offers. This was

the one great error, the one inexcusable blunder of Pitt's career. As Edmund Burke wrote, "He had it now in his power to come into the service of his country upon any plan of politics he might choose to dictate, with great and honourable terms to himself and every friend he had in the world, and with such a strength of power as would have been equal to anything but absolute despotism over king and kingdom" (May 1765). Pitt himself was sensible that he had acted wrongly, and, it is said, exclaimed to Temple—

> "Extinxti te meque, soror, populumque patresque
> Sidonios, urbemque tuam!"

Grenville and his faction, now that Pitt had met the royal offers with a peremptory refusal, felt secure from all assaults, and did not hesitate to offend their sovereign with the most galling pretensions and insulting restrictions. Their fall, however, was far nearer than in their security they imagined.

The Duke of Cumberland, as he could not form a Whig ministry with Pitt, resolved to form one without him, and fixed upon the Marquis of Rockingham, a man of admirable character and excellent talents, as its head. Newcastle, so long the chief of the old Whigs, took the Privy Seal; General Conway, a good soldier, and a tolerable speaker, became Secretary of State and leader of the House of Commons. At the same time, the marquis brought into Parliament his private secretary, and strengthened his government by the splendid eloquence and commanding parts of Edmund Burke.

The first disaster with which the new ministry had to contend was the death of their powerful patron, the

Duke of Cumberland. The second, was the open revolt in the American colonies. To contend with this insurrection now taxed all the energies of Rockingham and his colleagues. Grenville, the author of the weak and wicked Stamp Act, proposed to enforce it upon the colonists *vi et armis*, and to vindicate by sword and bayonet the authority of the Crown. Rockingham, on the other had, was of opinion that though the British Parliament hand supreme legislative power throughout the British empire, it was not always wise to exert it, and proposed to pacify the colonies by repealing the obnoxious measure. In the latter course they were supported by Pitt, and apparently countenanced by the king. But, in secret, the arbitrary and narrow-minded sovereign, always jealous of his prerogatives, and indignant at the contumacy of his rebellious subjects, was opposed to the repeal, and actually encouraged his private band of "friends" to vote against the government in which he professed to place his confidence.

Formidable, therefore, was the opposition arrayed against the ministers when a Bill for the Repeal of the Stamp Act was submitted to Parliament. But they persevered, supported as they were by two illustrious orators, Pitt and Burke, the greatest of their age, perhaps the greatest that England has ever seen. The debate lasted until long after midnight, and on the division it appeared that the ministers had the large majority of 108. And when the doors of the House were thrown open it was seen how anxiously this decision had been expected. General Conway was received with loud applause; but when Pitt appeared, the multitude burst into a frenzy of delight, and with shouts and cheers, and waving hats, a long train of his ad-

mirers accompanied him his to home. Grenville, in his turn, was loaded with the popular hatred, and went his way in a storm of oaths, hisses, and maledictions.

It would have been well for Pitt's fame and happiness if he had now allied himself with Rockingham, who with noble disinterestedness implored him to take the lead of the administration, and whose political principles were such as the Great Commoner himself loved to profess and defend. Unhappily his lofty mind was beguiled by the allurements of the court, and the patriot whom no bribes could corrupt surrendered to a pleasant smile and a flattering phrase from his sovereign. The king hated the Whigs much, but he hated Grenville more. There was only one man who could turn out the Whigs without letting Grenville in, and that was Pitt. Upon Pitt, therefore, the king lavished the artillery of his blandishments.

Lord Macaulay endeavours to defend the great orator's conduct at this time by reference to the miserable condition of his health. "The truth is," writes the brilliant essayist, "that he had for some time been in an unnatural state of excitement. His habits were gradually becoming more and more eccentric. A horror of all loud sounds grew upon him. No man could be more abstemious than Pitt, yet the profusion of his kitchen was a wonder even to epicures. Several dinners were always dressing, for his appetite was capricious and fanciful; and at whatever moment he felt inclined to eat, he expected a meal to be instantly on the table." Throughout his career Pitt would seem to have suffered from a restlessness, an ultra-activity, an excess of energy that almost amounted to morbidity of mind. He was never content until he had demolished what

he himself had raised. Out of place he longed for power; when power was in his hands he cried for retirement and tranquillity.

On the 9th July, 1766, the king dismissed the Rockingham cabinet, and summoned Mr. Pitt to show him how an able and dignified ministry might be formed. He immediately obeyed the royal summons, and with a haste and an excitement which materially increased his feverish irritability. It was now his object, he said, to break up all parties, to dissolve all political confederacies, and certainly he selected his colleagues with admirable impartiality. There was scarcely one of them had ever before been associated in office. Lord Camden had the great seal, Lord Shelburn was one Secretary of State, General Conway the other; the Duke of Grafton became First Lord of the Treasury, and Charles Townshend Chancellor of the Exchequer. Pitt's health would not admit of his acceptance of any laborious office, but he was declared Prime Minister, and elevated—let us say, in his case, degraded—to the House of Peers as Earl of Chatham.

From that moment the "Great Commoner" belonged to history, and the popularity of William Pitt became a thing of the past. It is difficult to say why his acceptance of a peerage, which surely no living statesman better deserved, should have had so violent an effect upon the public mind. But such was undoubtedly the case. Pitt was now advanced in years, and unequal to the anxieties and labours of parliamentary life in the House of Commons. It was natural he should prefer the dignified tranquillity of the Upper House. But the nation lampooned him as a traitor, and compared him to that William Pulteney who, in the previous reign

had sold his influence with the people for a similar mess of pottage. Contemned at home, his name lost its influence abroad. "The name of Pitt had been a charmed name. Our envoys tried in vain to conjure with the name of Chatham."

Over the long list of errors and eccentricities, the follies of a great but wayward mind; over the vacillations of purpose and the outbreaks of temper; over his imperious disputes with his colleagues, whom he treated like lackeys, and his pitiful excuses for business neglected and promises unfulfilled—let us not linger here. To us there is no pleasure in dwelling upon the littlenesses of a hero. We would fain admire the head of gold, and never lower our gaze, could we avoid it, to the feet of clay. Pitt gradually retired from the management of public affairs, and left his colleagues to their plots and dissensions. Having repurchased his favourite villa at Hayes, he withdrew to its sweet seclusion, and passed therein nearly two years almost forgotten by the country which had once adored him. His resignation of office scarcely excited a comment. It was as if Pitt were dead, and Chatham his silent mourner.

Powerful remedies had relieved him from his life-long disease, the gout, only to plunge him into this terrible condition of nervous irritability. But after a gloomy interval the gout returned, and suddenly, as if by magic, the great statesman regained all his former powers, and returned to the political world which he had, for so many years, moved to admiration or convulsed with fear.

"It was a strange recovery," says his biographer. "Men had been in the habit of talking of him as of one dead, and when he first showed himself at the king's levee,

started as if they had seen a ghost. It was more than two years and a half since he had appeared in public."

He woke up from his lethargy to gaze upon a new order of things. Most of his old colleagues were dead or had lost office. The bland, witty and *insouciant* Lord North sat smiling and composed as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Wilkes had been elevated into a hero by the unwise persecution of the court. The American colonies were openly arming against the mother-country. The great statesman's heart must have sunk within him. How changed the England of 1774 from the England of 1760! Where was her supremacy, her glory, her pride of place, her untarnished fame?

For the remainder of his career Chatham failed not to lift up his voice in defence of the interests of his country, and gathered round him a small but influential band of statesmen, who regarded him as their "guide, philosopher, and friend." He occupied not, indeed, that large space in the public eye which had been accorded to the Great Commoner; he belonged, as it were, to an earlier generation. Nor did he ever attain that sway in the Upper House which he had exercised in the Commons. His passionate eloquence was "not exactly the eloquence of the House of Lords," and produced but a slight effect upon that cold and impassive assemblage of venerable prelates and listless peers. Still he was heard with respect, while his past fame and glorious career did not fail to point his invectives with additional force, and lend his arguments increased weight.

In the famous Wilkes dispute the great earl spoke strongly and eloquently—not in defence of the demagogue, but of the constitutional rights which his oppo-

nents so boldly violated. On the American question we may regret that his judgment was biassed by his feelings, and that he who had protested against the taxation of the colonies by the imperial legislature, should, nevertheless, have sternly advocated their subjugation by military force. While the Marquis of Rockingham and his friends perceived the hopelessness of the attempt, and recognized the justice and the policy of acknowledging that independence which the United States had purchased with their blood, Chatham could only see that it involved a dismemberment of the empire with whose later glories his own name was so proudly associated. It was his patriotism, his imagination, his pride that influenced him; not his judgment. Indeed, he himself, before the commencement of that unhappy quarrel which an arbitrary king and a corrupt ministry fomented, had declared that it was impossible to conquer America. And yet now, when the independence of the States was virtually established, when disaster attended every movement of our arms, when France had flung herself into the war with all her great military power, he contended that the rebellion must be crushed, and the colonies once more annexed to the British crown. Let it, however, be remembered to the great orator's eternal honour, that he protested with indignant eloquence against the mode of warfare adopted by the British generals; against the employment of murderous and bloodthirsty Indians, under the stainless folds of the flag of England, to perpetrate barbarities from whose very recollection the soul instinctively recoils!

There is scarcely any incident in English history more generally known than the last appearance of

Chatham in the House of Peers. Not only has it been amply described by the ablest pens, but immortalized on the glowing canvas by one of our greatest artists. It was indeed a fitting close to a life which had had in it so much of the romance of the drama. It was the solemn last scene of a Greek tragedy, enveloped in the shadowy pomp of a sun that goes down into a sea of clouds.

The time was the 8th of April, 1778. The Duke of Richmond had notified his intention of moving an address to the throne against the further prosecution of the war with the colonies. Chatham had, for some weeks, ceased his attendance in Parliament, so much had his maladies grown upon him, but now, rousing himself with sudden excitement, he declared he would go down to the Peers and declare his hostility to the motion. In vain his friends and medical attendants sought to dissuade him from the dangerous effort. Accompanied by his son William, the future premier, and his son-in-law Lord Mahon, he entered the House, and, supported by them, limped to his accustomed seat. As he passed the peers rose and made way for him, and their attention was acknowledged by his usual stately bow He was attired, we are told, in a rich velvet coat. Wrappings of flannel protected his legs. He held his crutch in his hand. In his eyes glowed something of the brilliant light which in the days of his glory shone like a scathing fire; but so worn was his face, and so much concealed by his large wig, that the rest of his features could scarcely be distinguished.

After the Duke of Richmond had spoken, the aged statesman rose, leaning on his crutch, and addressed

The aged Chatham rose, leaning on his crutch, and addressed the House in tones low and inarticulate at first, but which gradually swelled into distinctness.—157.

the House—in tones low and inarticulate at first, but which gradually swelled into distinctness. His speech, however, was incoherent; of the once great orator there now remained but a feeble shadow, which could only remind the hearers with pain of the glory passed away for ever. The House heard him in solemn silence.

The Duke of Richmond replied with the utmost respect and gentle reverence. But it was observed that the earl manifested unusual irritability. He rose once more, pressed his hand to his heart, and suddenly fell back in an apoplectic fit, into the arms of the neighbouring peers. Stricken with emotion the House instantly separated, and the dying statesman was borne to the residence of one of the officers of Parliament, after which he recovered sufficiently to undergo removal to his favourite villa at Hayes, where he lingered for a few weeks, his bedside attended by his loving wife and children. There, on the 11th of May, 1778, his great spirit passed away in tranquillity.

His errors were buried with him in his grave, and a grateful people could only remember the services he had rendered to his country, the glory he had brought back to her disgraced standards, his lofty eloquence, his impassioned genius, his contempt of wealth, the splendour of his fame. A costly monument was erected at the public expense. He was interred in Westminster Abbey with the stately ceremonial of a public funeral. His debts were paid, and a suitable provision made that his family might maintain the dignity of the title which his genius had illustrated. And even to this day, the

memory of the "Great Commoner," of the glorious orator whose thunder once shook our senate, and wielded at will our democracy, is cherished in the heart of England with a reverent affection.

"Such men are raised to station and command,
When providence means mercy to a land;
He speaks, and they appear; to him they owe
Skill to direct, and strength to strike the blow;
To manage with address, to seize with power
The crisis of a dark decisive hour."

COWPER.

WILLIAM PITT.

(A.D. 1759—1805.)

"Oh, think, how to his latest day,
When death, just hovering, claimed his prey,
With Palinure's unaltered mood,
Firm at his dangerous post he stood;
Each call for needful rest repelled,
With dying hand the rudder held,
Till, in his fall, with fateful sway,
The steerage of the realm gave way!
Then, while on Britain's thousand plains,
One unpolluted church remains,
Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent around
The bloody tocsin's maddening sound,
But still, upon the hallowed day,
Convoke the swains to praise and pray.
While faith and civil peace are dear,
Grace this cold marble with a tear,—
He who preserv'd them, PITT, lies here!"

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

WILLIAM PITT, the second son of the "great Earl of Chatham," was born at his father's seat, Hayes, in Kent, on the 28th May, 1759.

"The child," says Lord Macaulay, in picturesque phrase, "inherited a name which, at the time of his birth, was the most illustrious in the civilized world, and was pronounced by every Englishman with pride, and by every enemy of England with mingled admira-

tion and terror. During the first year of his life, every month had its illuminations and bonfires, and every wind brought some messenger charged with joyful tidings and hostile standards. In Westphalia, the English infantry won a great battle, which arrested the armies of Louis XV. in the midst of a career of conquest; Boscawen defeated one French fleet on the coast of Portugal; Hawke put to flight another in the Bay of Biscay; Johnson took Niagara; Amherst took Ticonderoga; Wolfe died by the most enviable of deaths under the walls of Quebec; Clive destroyed a Dutch armament in the Hoogly, and established the English supremacy in Bengal; Coote routed Lally at Wandewash, and established the English supremacy in the Carnatic. The nation, while loudly applauding the successful warriors, considered them all, on sea and on land, in Europe, in America, and in Asia, merely as instruments which received their direction from one superior mind. It was the great William Pitt, the Great Commoner, who had vanquished French marshals in Germany and French admirals on the Atlantic; who had conquered for his country one great empire on the frozen shores of Ontario, and another under the tropical sun near the mouths of the Ganges."

It was in the midst of all this triumph and victory that William Pitt was born. Scarcely, however, had he escaped from the thraldom of the nursery before the scene was changed, and his father, as Earl of Chatham, had sacrificed his power and popularity. From the murmurs of the ungrateful mob, and the indifference of the fickle senate, the disgraced statesman turned for relief and consolation to his affectionate family. "Whatever might be the vicissitudes of his public life, he

never failed to find peace and love by his own hearth. He loved all his children, and was loved by them; and, of all his children, the one of whom he was fondest and proudest was his second son."

William Pitt, at an early age, gave indications of that aspiring genius which distinguished his maturer career. He was in his eighth year when (Aug. 1766) his father was created Earl of Chatham; but the child had already learnt to long for political renown, and he exclaimed to his tutor, "I am glad that I am not the eldest son; I want to speak in the House of Commons, like papa." So early was manifested that love of power which in after life isolated him from his compeers, and so early did he manifest his contempt for titles and dignities, the baubles which attract meaner minds.

The bodily strength of the youthful politician was not equal to his mental, and he was considered incapable of enduring the hardships of public school life. He was, therefore, educated at home, and with so much care and discretion, that while his physical health rapidly improved, he acquired a surprising knowledge both of the classics and mathematics. To give stamina and stimulus to his enfeebled frame, his medical attendants freely prescribed port wine, and he daily, it is said, drank a quantity which, in these days of temperance, would almost satisfy a professed wine-bibber. It was thus he acquired that love of port which never deserted him, and which, in later life, is supposed to have fed the disease that destroyed him.

As he grew older he grew stronger, thanks to his port wine regimen—or to other favourable influences—and towards the close of 1773 was considered fit for entrance upon an university life. He was despatched

to Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, though only in his fifteenth year; and placed under the care of a learned and diligent tutor, Pretyman, a senior wrangler of his college, who laboriously cultivated the quick and retentive intellect of his pupil, and so endeared himself to his youthful disciple, that Pitt seized the earliest opportunity in his official life to reward him with the deanery of St. Paul's and the bishopric of Lincoln.

Pitt's collegiate life might be accepted as a lesson and an example by "fast" young undergraduates. His attendance at chapel was regular; he dined daily in his hall; he neither gave nor went to wine parties or suppers. His recreations were few and simple; his devotion to his studies was unremitting. This, indeed, was the only period of his life when he had time for scholastic pursuits. To the prime minister of England and leader of the House of Commons the polity of the empire allows but little leisure. Protocols, despatches, and audiences by day—parliamentary sittings far into the night—absorb his best energies, and all the working hours both of day and night. While Pitt was seated at the council board, or thundering in the senate, he had no time for Latin hexameters, or Greek alcaics. All that he knew, and he knew a great deal, was acquired at Pembroke Hall. There he obtained his familiarity with Greek, Latin, and mathematics. There he read Lycophon's Cassandra, the obscurest of obscure works, but mastered by Pitt at first sight, "with an ease which," says Dr. Pretyman, "if I had not witnessed it, I should have thought beyond the compass of human intellect." There too he learnt the rudiments, and no more than the rudiments, of French. His acquaintance with the English classics was that of an intelligent

admirer rather than that of an enthusiastic lover. Shakspeare he had read frequently, and Milton he had read still oftener, preferring, as might be supposed, those declamatory passages which are adapted to display the skill of an accomplished elocutionist. Such passages he would deliver aloud, with "just emphasis" and "melodious cadence." From his father he had received much admirable instruction in the skilful management of a voice which was naturally sonorous and of extensive compass; so that, at a later period, the wits of the Whigs would sarcastically observe that the great orator of the Commons had been "taught by his dad on a stool."

His education was necessarily directed to one distinct object—to fit him for a high position in public life, and to enable him to hold his own in parliamentary warfare. His time, therefore, was not wasted in attempting to imitate the prose of Cicero, or in burlesquing the metres, without catching the *vivida vis* of the poetry of Horace. He never, indeed, acquired any skill in the construction of Latin or Greek verses; but he acquired what was infinitely more valuable, a thorough command of the English tongue. "His practice was to look over a page or two of a Greek or Latin author, to make himself master of the meaning, and then to read the passage straight forward into his own language." This practice, begun under his first teacher, Wilson, was continued under Pretyman. It is not strange that a young man of great abilities, who had been exercised in this way during ten years, should have acquired an almost unrivalled power of putting his thoughts, without premeditation, into words well selected and well arranged.

Of his capability of entering into the spirit of the classic writers, and of the correctness with which he wrote English verse, an interesting example is afforded by Pitt's latest and best biographer, Earl Stanhope. It is an Horatian translation:—

"How bless'd, how glorious they who bravely fall,
Their lives devoted at their country's call!
Death, too, pursues the coward as he flies,
The dart o'ertakes him, and disgrac'd he dies.
No mean repulse intrepid virtue knows,
Spotless and pure her native splendour glows;
No gaudy ensigns hers of borrowed pow'r,
No fame dependant on the varying hour;
Bow'd to no yoke her honours are her own,
Nor court the breath of popular renown.
On wing sublime resistless virtue soars,
And, spurning human haunts and earthly shores,
To those whom godlike deeds forbid to die,
Unbars the gates of immortality."

From HORACE, *Book* iii. *Ode* 2.

And not only by assiduous reading did the aspiring student endeavour to qualify himself to earn distinction in the arena where his father had embellished his name with a deathless renown. During his vacations he regularly attended the debates at Westminster, not as a matter of idle curiosity, but as a part of his regular curriculum of study. He listened to the speeches of the most eminent debaters with the keenest attention, analyzing their arguments, and mentally supplying confirmatory statements or logical refutations. On one occasion he was introduced into the House of Lords by his future rival, Charles James Fox, who was afterwards wont to relate that during the debate Pitt frequently addressed him, "Surely, Mr. Fox, that argu-

ment might thus be met;" or, "Yes, but he lays himself open to an obvious retort." With such force of reasoning and closeness of attention did the lad, in his eighteenth year, follow up the harangues delivered on either side of the House.

It was on the 7th of April, 1778, that Pitt, for the last time, attended his illustrious father to the House of Peers. The debate on that evening would turn, it was known, on the recognition by France of the independence of the United States. The Earl of Chatham had always held that the revolt of the American colonies was justifiable, but by a strange perversion of reasoning he maintained that their independence ought not to be acknowledged. In this he was actuated not so much by jealousy of the United States as by hatred of France, who would, he thought, exult in the degradation and dismemberment of the British empire. The Duke of Richmond had given notice of his intention to move an address, censuring the further prosecution of hostilities against America. Chatham resolved on being in his place in the House of Lords to oppose it.

He had long suffered from severe illness, and his medical attendants would have dissuaded him from going, but he was resolved. He was accompanied by Pitt, and his son-in-law, Lord Mahon. He spoke with energy, but incoherently. The Duke of Richmond replied with courteous consideration. Irritable and excited, the great earl rose again, but immediately sank down in an apoplectic fit. A few weeks later he expired at Hayes, surrounded by his family, and piously attended to the last by his second and favourite son. At his public funeral in Westminster Abbey that son was chief mourner, and saw the coffin deposited in the

transept where, twenty-seven years later, his own was to be interred.

The Earl of Chatham had amassed great glory, but acquired no fortune. A grateful nation paid his debts, and made provision for his family. But for Pitt there was little more than £300 a year, and he could hope for nothing from his brother, whose income was scarcely sufficient to enable him to support his title with decent state. It became imperative upon him, therefore, to select a profession. He chose the law, quitted Cambridge (in 1780), was called to the bar, joined the western circuit, and plunged into all the cares and anxieties of legal life. In the autumn of 1780 he ventured to offer himself as a candidate for the representation of the University in Parliament, but his youth was a reproach which his undoubted talents could not wipe off, and he stood at the bottom of the poll. But his father's friend, the Duke of Rutland, perceiving the young man's longing for parliamentary distinction, induced Sir James Lowther to bring him in for his own snug pocket borough of Appleby.

Pitt entered Parliament at a critical period in the history of his country. It was the epoch of one of those great struggles for existence through which England has always passed successfully, owing to the courage and resources of her sons. But at this time there were no able men at the helm, and the vessel of the state was drifting perilously near the breakers. Lord North, the premier, was himself a man of honour, of talents, of administrative capacity; but his colleagues were mostly unequal to their high offices, and he himself was controlled by a king who was at once the most obstinate and the most incapable of all our English sovereigns.

The ministry, thus feeble in composition, and still feebler in its servility to the king, was confronted by two formidable parties. Of these the more powerful was the Whig party, led in the Lords by the Marquis of Rockingham, in the Commons by Fox and Burke. The smaller phalanx was guided by Lords Shelburne and Camden, Barré, and Dunning, and to this compact and able opposition Pitt immediately allied himself.

The condition of public affairs at this epoch has been described by one whose force of language no meaner writer can hope to equal. "The dangers of the country," says Lord Macaulay, "were such as might well have disturbed even a constant mind. Army after army had been sent in vain against the rebellious colonists of North America. On pitched fields of battle the advantage had been with the disciplined troops of the mother country. But it was not on pitched fields of battle that the event of such a contest could be decided. An armed nation, with hunger and the Atlantic for auxiliaries, was not to be subjugated. Meanwhile the House of Bourbon, humbled to the dust a few years before by the genius and vigour of Chatham, had seized the opportunity of revenge. France and Spain were united against us, and had recently been joined by Holland. The command of the Mediterranean had been for a time lost. The British flag had been scarcely able to maintain itself in the British Channel. The northern powers professed neutrality, but their neutrality had a menacing aspect. In the east Hyder had descended on the Carnatic, had destroyed the little army of Baillie, and had spread terror even to the ramparts of Fort St. George. The discontents of Ireland threatened nothing less than civil war. In England, the authority of the

government had sunk to the lowest point. The king and the House of Commons were alike unpopular. The cry for parliamentary reform was scarcely less loud and vehement than in the autumn of 1830. Formidable associations, headed, not by ordinary demagogues, but by men of high rank, stainless character, and distinguished ability, demanded a revision of the representative system. The populace, emboldened by the impotence and irresolution of the government, had recently broken loose from all restraint, besieged the chambers of the legislature, hustled peers, hunted bishops, attacked the residences of ambassadors, opened prisons, burned and pulled down houses. London had presented during some days the aspect of a city taken by storm, and it had been necessary to form a camp among the trees of St. James's Park."

Such was the condition of affairs at home and abroad when Pitt, in 1781, took his seat in the House of Commons. Twenty-one years before, his father was at the helm, and the flag of England then floated victorious on every sea. Now, how stormy was the horizon! How black with menacing clouds the future! Surely the contrast presented itself to the youthful statesman as he took his seat in the House, whose walls had so often echoed his father's lofty eloquence.

Pitt's first speech was in favour of Edmund Burke's measure of economical reform, February 26, 1781, and astonished and delighted the House. Both friends and foes acknowledged the eloquence of his language and the charm of his elocution. Burke, excited even to tears, exclaimed, "It is not a chip of the old block, it is the old block itself." And when a member observed to Fox, "Pitt will be one of the first men in Parliament,"

the great orator replied, "He is so already." Never was a debût more successful on the perilous stage of St. Stephen's—that stage where so many able men have made the most unfortunate *fiascos*—and his later efforts, in the same session, amply supported the reputation he had acquired. During the summer he went the western circuit, pleaded with distinction in several causes, and won the applause of "Buller from the bench, and Dunning at the bar."

When Parliament reassembled in November, Pitt attacked the ministry with surprising energy and force. He gained an able adherent in the very ministry he attacked—Harry Dundas, Lord Advocate of Scotland, who, perceiving the weakness of his party, hastened to provide for himself in the approaching ruin. This, however, was his last tergiversation. Dundas remained faithful to Pitt until death severed their long connection. The government could not face so brilliant and powerful an opposition. Lord North, strongly against the king's wish, resigned, and the upright and able Marquis of Rockingham became Prime Minister. Lord Shelburne and Fox were made Secretaries of State; Lord John Cavendish, Chancellor of the Exchequer; and the glittering prize of the Great Seal fell to the lot of the impetuous and self-reliant Thurlow. To Pitt was offered the lucrative sinecure of the Vice-Treasurership of Ireland; but, to the surprise of everybody, he declined it. He had but £300 a year, and the post offered to him was worth £5000, but Pitt boldly stated his resolve, even in the House of Commons, to accept no office which did not carry with it a seat in the Cabinet. His "presumption" was censured by a few; but most people saw in this haughty boast the ambition

of a noble mind, and declared that the young statesman was a Pitt in spirit as he was already a Pitt in the force of his genius and the power of his eloquence.

To those persons who have been content to accept the popular idea of Pitt, which represents him as the most violent and bigoted of Tories, it will be a surprise to learn that Pitt was one of the earliest and warmest advocates of Parliamentary reform. He spoke and voted in favour of shortening the duration of Parliaments. He moved the appointment of a committee which should inquire into the condition of the representation, and the propriety of an extension of the franchise. "Rotten boroughs" he denounced with peculiar force of language, and spoke of bribery and corruption as the source of all the misfortunes of England; as having "grown with her growth, and strengthened with her strength, but not diminished with her diminution, or decayed with her decay." His motion was only defeated by a majority of twenty.

Meanwhile, Lord Rockingham's administration did much useful work, and prepared the way for more. The independence of the United States was to be recognized, and an end put to a criminal and hopeless war. A treaty of peace was concluded with Holland. Lord Rodney's victory over the Spanish fleet, and the repulse of the combined French and Spanish attack upon Gibraltar, re-asserted the naval supremacy of England. Discontent was partially appeased in Ireland by the acknowledgment of the independence of the Irish Parliament. But it was only the high character of Lord Rockingham which lent stability to an administration composed of so many discordant elements, and that nobleman's premature death, three months after

its formation (A.D. 1782), was the signal of its downfall.

The king now placed Lord Shelburne at the head of the ministry. But Shelburne and Burke, Fox and Cavendish, were united by no amicable feelings, and the latter three ministers immediately resigned their offices. Thus weakened, where most he needed support in the House of Commons, Shelburne looked around him for help, and recognizing the genius of Pitt, entrusted to him the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. He had but just completed his twenty-third year.

The Shelburne administration completed the negotiations which the Rockingham ministry had begun, and by their treaties with France and Spain restored peace to exhausted Europe (A.D. 1783). But they were not fated long to enjoy the honours they had fairly won. And the blow which overthrew them fell all the heavier that it was unjustly dealt by the hand of their former colleague, Charles James Fox.

Fox perceived that there then existed three sections in the House of Commons, each about equal in strength, and neither able to withstand a conjunction of the two others; one section led by himself, another by Lord North, and the ministerial by Pitt and Shelburne. It was evident that no cabinet could long exist by the support of a single section. The others, combining on any general question, could easily overthrow it. A strong ministry, then, could only be formed by a coalition, and a coalition between Fox and Shelburne was not only desirable, but natural, for there was but little real difference between the political opinions of either. Unfortunately for the weal of England, and the fair fame of Fox, the great orator had conceived a bitter

enmity against his former colleague, Shelburne, and when the latter employed Pitt to offer him a place in the ministry, "Is Lord Shelburne," he asked, "to remain prime minister?" "Yes," was Pitt's reply. "It is impossible," exclaimed Fox, "that I can act under him." "And impossible that I can betray him," rejoined Pitt; "negotiation is, therefore, at an end." From that time, and until Pitt's early death, a profound spirit of hostility separated the two great statesmen, and the former friends became avowed rivals.

To revenge himself upon Pitt and Shelburne, Fox now took a fatal step—a step which not even his warmest admirers can hope to justify—he formed a shameful coalition with Lord North, the very minister whom for years he had attacked, whose measures he had denounced, whom he had menaced with an impeachment, and satirized as tyrannical, corrupt, and incapable. The country regarded this strange coalition with an unfriendly eye, and its suspicion was strengthened into contempt when both Burke and Fox, the great opponents of the late war, actually joined Lord North, its author and director, in passing a vote of censure upon the peace concluded by the government. Pitt referred in felicitous phrase to the dishonourable alliance: "If," he said, "this ill-omened and unnatural marriage be not yet consummated, I know of a just and lawful impediment; and, in the name of the public weal, I forbid the banns."

But as Fox had foreseen, the coalition, in Parliament at least, was successful, and Shelburne was compelled to resign. In vain the king struggled against the return of Fox, whom he personally detested, to power, and even offered the premiership to Pitt. Pitt had

weighed well the balance of parties. He saw that "the pear was not yet ripe," and respectfully declined his sovereign's gracious offer. Overtures were then made to Lord North, to induce him to break up the coalition. But the royal diplomatist was unsuccessful. The Duke of Portland became First Lord of the Treasury, and Fox and North Secretaries of State with apparently equal power; but the real head of the cabinet and its guiding spirit was Charles James Fox.

It was now so late in the session that no parliamentary struggle of importance could be attempted, but Pitt made one more attempt to carry a measure of representative reform. He proposed to increase the number of representatives of counties by 100, and to create some new electoral districts in the metropolis. He also suggested that every borough should be disfranchised of which an election committee reported that the majority of voters was corrupt. His project was too liberal for the time, and was thrown out by 293 votes to 149.

During the recess Pitt made his first and only visit to the Continent, in company with the famous philanthropist William Wilberforce. At Paris he was received in the salons with extraordinary enthusiasm. He was not only in himself a man of mark, a rising politician of repute, but he was the son of the great Chatham, of the statesman whose name had at one time that singular influence upon continental nations which is nowadays exercised by the name of Palmerston. One remarkable saying which dropped from him during this tour has been preserved. A French gentleman expressed some surprise at the immense influence which Fox, a man of pleasure, ruined by the dice-box and the turf, exercised over the English nation. "You

have not," said Pitt, "been under the wand of the magician."

Parliament reassembled in November, 1783. The session opened with apparently favourable prospects for the chiefs of the coalition. The king, indeed, was hostile, but they commanded a large majority in the Lords, and a still larger in the Commons. But in truth this majority was not a real one. A coalition suited the purposes of Fox and North, and their official adherents, but was endured rather than favoured by their respective supporters. The Tories of Lord North's faction could neither assimilate nor sympathize with the Whigs so long led by Fox. So the most violent of both parties were prepared at the earliest opportunity to abandon their false leaders, and enrol themselves under a new chief. The Tories were wroth with Lord North because he had forced Fox upon his sovereign. The Whigs were indignant against Fox because he had united with the corrupt and arbitrary North. Under whose standard should they now rally? With one consent both parties turned their eyes to Pitt. He was at once the champion of the king, and the advocate of a reformed Parliament. He was a Tory in his devotion to the throne, and a Whig in his loyalty to the people. He became, therefore, the recognized leader of a compact and influential opposition, though still outnumbered by the large but disorderly ranks of the ministerialists.

Such was the position of parties when Fox introduced his famous India Bill. The tumult immediately arose. It was like the first cannon shot discharged by one of two hostile armies drawn up face to face on a battle-field. On each side expectancy gave place to

action. Fox's comprehensive and audacious measure provided that the government of British India, hitherto administered by the East India Company, should be vested in the hands of seven commissioners to be appointed by Parliament, and not to be removeable at the will of the Crown. The first chairman of this singularly constituted board was to be Earl Fitzwilliam, one of Fox's warmest friends, and one of the members was to be Lord North's eldest son.

A hundred interests were assailed by this measure, and rose in fierce protestation against it. The king declared that it was a subversion of his prerogative. The India Company that it was a violation of its charter. Both Tories and Radicals denounced it as a bold bid on the part of its author for an unlimited patronage. In spite, however, of an uncompromising opposition it passed the House of Commons. But in the Lords the successful career of the ministry was suddenly impeded. The king had employed Pitt's cousin, Earl Temple, to make it generally known that he should regard every peer who voted in favour of the India Bill as his personal foe. The influence of the Crown was irresistible. The bill was rejected. Fox and North immediately gave up their seals, and Pitt was appointed First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The difficulties which this young premier—a minister of twenty-five—was called upon to confront would have dismayed a less resolute spirit. In the Lords, it is true, he commanded a majority, and his policy was ably advocated by Earl Camden, and Lord Chancellor Thurlow. But in the Commons he was outnumbered by a powerful opposition, and had no speaker of distinction, except Dundas, to answer Fox, Burke, Sheridan,

and North. Under these circumstances, most ministers would at once have dissolved Parliament, and appealed to the country. But Pitt, more wisely, resolved to give time for the feelings of the country to be excited in his favour by his steady persistence against an unscrupulous opposition.

Between the 17th of December, 1783, and the 8th of March, 1784, Pitt was beaten in sixteen divisions. But his defeats were simply parliamentary, and strengthened rather that weakened his position in the country. From every part of the kingdom came addresses assuring him of the national favour. The city of London presented him with its freedom in a gold box, and the citizens entertained him with unprecedented splendour in Grocers' Hall. Thus supported by the king and the people his position daily grew firmer. The majority against him gradually decreased. His minority was slowly but surely growing up into a majority. At this crisis his popularity was wonderfully increased by an act of public virtue rarer in those days than in ours. A sinecure for life, the Clerkship of the Pells, worth £3000 a year, and not incompatible with a seat in the Commons, fell vacant. Pitt was loaded with debt and pecuniary anxieties. Besides his official income, he had but £300 a year, and everybody supposed that he would have nominated himself to the lucrative vacancy. Nor would the appointment have been unpopular. But Pitt, in spite of the kindly counsel of his friends, and in apparent opposition to his own interests, conferred the sinecure on the able and eloquent Colonel Barré, now, in his old age, afflicted with poverty and blindness. "By this arrangement," says Lord Macaulay, "a pension which the Rockingham ad-

ministration had granted to Barré was saved to the public. Never was there a happier stroke of policy. About treaties, wars, expeditions, tariffs, budgets, there will always be room for dispute. The policy which is applauded by half the nation may be condemned by the other half. But pecuniary disinterestedness everybody comprehends. It is a great thing for a man who has only £300 a year to be able to show that he considers £3000 a year as mere dirt beneath his feet when compared with the public interest and the public esteem. Pitt had his reward. No minister was ever more rancorously libelled; but even when he was known to be overwhelmed with debt, when millions were passing through his hands, when the wealthiest magnates of the realm were soliciting him for marquisates and garters, his bitterest enemies did not dare to accuse him of touching unlawful gain."

Pitt at last triumphed over the opposition. The last division against him was carried but by one vote. The supplies were granted, the Mutiny Act was passed, the king dissolved Parliament, and Pitt appealed to the people.

The response to that appeal was a triumphant majority in his favour. No less than 160 members of the coalition were turned out by their indignant constituents, and ministerialists elected in their stead. Pitt himself was returned for the University of Cambridge at the head of the poll. He was now the most powerful subject in Europe, the favourite of his king, the undisputed ruler of Parliament, the idol of his countrymen. And all these honours he had attained at the age of twenty-five!

As a parliamentary leader Pitt has never been ex-

celled; as a statesman he has often been surpassed; as an orator, though his rhetorical powers were great, he was rivalled by Burke, Fox, and Sheridan; but none of his cotemporaries, perhaps not one of his successors, has so thoroughly understood both the theory and practice of parliamentary government. He could not accumulate such a wealth of recondite allusions as Burke, or pour out such a flood of fervid declamation as Fox; but he possessed the art of explaining political questions or financial difficulties with wonderful clearness. His sarcasm was keen and ready. His command of himself was perfect. He thoroughly understood the tone and temper of the House of Commons, and his victories in that arena almost compensated him for his disastrous failures elsewhere. As a minister in the piping times of peace he was unequalled, but he was unfitted to cope with the difficulties of an European war. Better for the fame of Pitt had he died in 1792, before the outburst of the French Revolution. He might then have been regarded as England's greatest statesman. He is now but the first in the second rank.

From 1784 to 1792, his administration was a series of successes. England was prosperous, and her people were contented. Trade flourished, and commerce increased. The ports were thronged with ships from every clime. English keels ploughed every sea. In Hindostan, our supremacy was established and extended by a succession of able proconsuls. Loyalty, long a stranger to English bosoms, grew strong and enthusiastic under the sway of a monarch who loved boiled leg of mutton and turnips, and was actually faithful to his wife, one of the plainest and most narrow-minded of German *frau*s. A minister who had secured

such blessings to England was sure of English gratitude, and the popularity of Pitt never declined throughout these eight years of sunshine and peace. In some measure, it is true, this popularity was due to his admirable private life. Unlike the young men of their age, unlike the courtiers and statesmen who joined in the debaucheries of George Prince of Wales, Pitt neither gambled nor assorted with loose women. No aristocratic stripling could ascribe his ruin to Pitt's example or presence at the faro table. He was partial to his bottle of port wine; but it was known that his health was bad, and that a generous regimen was prescribed to him by his physicians. Nor did he drink to excess. Only on one occasion was he known to be intoxicated, and then he addressed the House of Commons in reply to a violent personal attack made upon him by Mr. William Lambton. The exposure, however, was so unusual that it excited general consternation; and on the following morning Mr. Ley, the desk assistant to the House of Commons, told the Speaker that he had been quite ill ever since Mr. Pitt's strange exhibition. "It gave me," he said, "a violent headache." On hearing this Pitt laughingly retorted, "I think it an excellent arrangement that I should have the wine, and the clerk the headache."

In 1793 the tide turned, and Pitt, who had so successfully guided the vessel of the state over sunny seas, favoured by auspicious winds, was suddenly summoned to confront a stormy ocean and a threatening gale. Canning, his disciple and eulogist, wrote of him as "the pilot who weathered the storm;" but this was the language of flattery rather than of truth. Unlike his great father he was incapable of military organization,

and unable to grapple with the ramifications of a prolonged war. In a smooth sea there was no more admirable pilot, but in stormy weather his only merit was this, that he never despaired of his country.

When the French revolution broke out Pitt, to use a familiar phraseology, "lost his head." His mind grew fevered with visions of Jacobinical outrages in England, and in imagination he already saw George III. and Queen Charlotte proceeding from a dungeon in the Tower to a scaffold on Tower-hill. The excitement which the revolutionary doctrines preached by the French demagogues naturally produced in England Pitt misunderstood in its nature, and exaggerated in its extent. At first, indeed, he would have avoided a French war. As late as the session of 1792 he spoke hopefully of a long period of peace, prosperity, and diminished taxation. But soon he gave way to the fears of his master, and the prejudices of the aristocracy, and the alarm of the middle classes; and having once embarked upon a policy of repression, he pursued it to its full extent. The press was gagged, public meetings were restricted, old laws of tyrannical severity were revived, men were tried for purely speculative opinions, and punished with extravagant rigour. And these measures of coercion were adopted when eleven-twelfths of the nation were as hotly anti-Jacobinical as their king! It is true that towards Ireland, instigated by Cornwallis, the viceroy, and Castlereagh, the chief secretary, he pursued a liberal policy; but in England he was as arbitrary as a Turkish sultan, and his theory of government would have delighted an eastern pacha.

But while thus erroneously vigorous at home, abroad

he was lamentably feeble. He failed to comprehend the character of the war that had involved all Europe in its flames. Like the Roundhead leaders in the early days of the great civil war, he undervalued his opponents; and unfortunately for England there was no Cromwell at that time to discern with the intuition of genius the nature of the struggle, and the secret by which victory was to be won. His war policy may be summed up in two words, subsidies and coalitions. He subsidized incapable European potentates, and superannuated military martinets. He formed coalitions of European powers, which were broken immediately the interest of one of these powers could be promoted by treachery to the rest. Our navy, indeed, under the able administration of Earl Spencer, maintained its glory untarnished; but our army, expended in small expeditions and guided by incapable generals, was "the laughing-stock of all Europe."

Yet in the House of Commons, Pitt still reigned supreme. His military schemes proved disgraceful failures, his coalitions crumbled into the dust as rapidly as they were formed. The French army overran Europe, Ireland rebelled, the fleet mutinied, but still he commanded a daily increasing majority. Session after session the opposition decreased in numbers and influence. His home policy was as narrow-minded as it was tyrannical, his foreign policy as feeble as it was extravagant; but still he triumphed in Parliament, and preserved his sway over the nation. We believe this to have been the case, simply because Pitt *never despaired*. No calamity overwhelmed him. Every fresh disaster seemed but to revive his hopes, and strengthen his resolution. He stood there on the floor of St. Ste-

phen's the English minister *that would never confess he was beaten*, and Englishmen derived confidence from *his* confidence, admired his courage, and sympathized with his determination.

We must now glance for awhile at the great minister's domestic life. His favourite retreat was at Holwood Hill, near Keston, Kent; and his favourite amusement, planting and gardening. While residing there, in 1796, his acquaintance with his neighbour, Lord Auckland, who lived at Beckenham, ripened into a close intimacy; and the cold, unimpassioned statesman, who never scribbled an erotic stanza in his life, fell in love—if Pitt's nature was capable of love—with Lord Auckland's eldest daughter, the Honourable Eleanor Eden, a lady of great personal attractions and considerable mental powers. This "strong attachment"—for such Pitt's latest and best biographer, Earl Stanhope, designates it—did not, however, proceed to a proposal and a marriage. The course of true love never *did* run smooth, and in this case a prudent father was the insuperable obstacle. In reply to a letter from Pitt in which he confessed, in the warmest terms, his attachment to Miss Eden, but explained that in his circumstances he felt he could not presume to make her an offer of marriage, Lord Auckland remarked that "he was aware in general of the circumstances of pecuniary debt and difficulty in which Mr. Pitt had become involved; that he did not deny the attachment of Mr. Pitt might have been fully appreciated; but he could not wish, any more than Mr. Pitt, that his daughter, who, as one of many children, had a very small fortune of her own, should, under some contingencies of office or of life, be left wholly unprovided." Miss Eden, two

years afterwards, married Lord Hobart, subsequently Earl of Buckinghamshire.

On Sunday, May 27, 1798, at three o'clock in the afternoon, Pitt fought his famous duel on Putney Heath with Mr. Tierney, one of the leaders of the opposition. Pitt fired his pistol in the air, after receiving unhurt his opponent's fire. The cause of this most ridiculous and humiliating affair, for in such a light only can it be regarded by men of sense, was a saying of Pitt's in the course of a heated and prolonged debate. Referring to Tierney's censures on the military plans of the government, Pitt exclaimed, "How can the honourable gentleman's opposition to the measure be accounted for, but from a desire to obstruct the defence of the country?" By way of "satisfaction" for so innocent a query Pitt was willing to risk, and Tierney was prepared to imperil, a life which at that time was undoubtedly of great value to England.

Before we return to our outline of Pitt's public career it will be convenient for us to fill up our sketches of his private life, even though we should interfere with a strict chronological arrangement. The pecuniary difficulties which harassed him to the last, would seem to have been the result of his own gross carelessness and mismanagement. In 1802, on his withdrawal from office, they came to a crisis, and he was literally haunted by importunate creditors. As early as 1797 his debts had swollen to an amount between £35,000 and £40,000, including two mortgages (£7000 and £4000) upon his estate at Holwood. But in 1802 they had increased to £45,064. "It is not easy at first sight," says Earl Stanhope, "to understand or explain such enormous liabilities. As First Lord of the Treasury

and Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Pitt had a salary of £6000 a year. As Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports there was a further salary of £3000, besides certain small dues and rents upon the Dover coast, amounting to a few hundred pounds more. On the whole, then, since 1792, Pitt had been in the receipt of nearly £10,000 a year. He had no family to maintain—he had no expensive tastes to indulge—he had never, like Fox, frequented the gaming table—he had not, like Windham, large election bills to pay. With common care, he ought not to have spent above two-thirds of his official income. But, unhappily, that common care was altogether wanting. Pitt, intent only on the national exchequer, allowed himself no time to go through his own accounts. The consequence was, that he came to be plundered without stint or mercy by some of his domestics. Once or twice during his official life he had asked his friend, Lord Carrington, to examine his household accounts. Lord Carrington subsequently told Mr. Wilberforce the results of that inquiry. He had found that the waste of the servants' hall was almost fabulous. The quantity of butcher's meat charged in the bills was nine hundred weight a week. The consumption of poultry, fish, and tea was in proportion. The charge for the servants in wages, board wages, liveries, and bills at Holwood and in London, exceded £2300 a year."

Pitt's friends were at a loss for means to extricate him from his embarrassments. He had resolved to sell Holwood and reduce his establishment to the most economical scale possible, but money was needed for the satisfaction of the humbler and noisier tradespeople. His proud temper recoiled from a grant of public

money. He rejected the king's offer of £30,000 from his privy purse, and the noble proposal of the London merchants to raise a subscription of £100,000. It was, therefore, left for his private friends to assist him; but even on this point his opposition might be expected. The sarcasm with which he had visited Fox under similar circumstances was remembered. When the subscription had begun, and persons were conjecturing whether Fox would accept or refuse such elemosynary assistance, a friend said to Pitt, "I wonder how Fox will take it." "*Take* it," was Pitt's keen rejoinder, "why, quarterly or half-yearly, I suppose." The proud statesman's reluctance, however, was at length overcome, and he received from his friends nearly £12,000, a sum which relieved him from his most pressing difficulties.

Towards the close of 1802 his bachelor *ménage* was enlivened by the arrival of his niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, to whom, during the remainder of his life, he extended the most generous and kindly protection, and by whose tender care and devoted attachment his later years were rendered happier, and his comforts largely increased. This kind act, like most good deeds and generous actions, was, indeed, its own reward. "Lady Hester," says Earl Stanhope, "quickly formed for him a strong and devoted attachment, which she extended to his memory so long as her own life endured. On his part he came to regard her with almost a father's affection." She was twenty-seven years old when she became the inmate of her uncle's house, and combined, with considerable personal attractions, a lively flow of conversation, much quickness of discernment, and powers of sparkling repartee, which were only too apt

to lead her into biting satire. "Mr. Pitt," says his biographer, "was on some occasions much discomposed by her sprightly sallies, which did not always spare his own Cabinet colleagues. But on the whole her young presence proved to be, as it were, a light in his dwelling. It gave it that charm which only a female presence can impart. It tended, as I believe, far more than his return to power, to cheer and brighten his few, too few, remaining years.

I have said that her wit was too unrestrained, and that it did not always spare Mr. Pitt's most intimate friends. Of this I will give only one instance. Lord Mulgrave had been named by Mr. Pitt Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a post which, as some persons thought, would overtask his mental powers. Shortly afterwards, Lord Mulgrave came one morning to breakfast with Mr. Pitt, and desiring to eat an egg, could find on the table only a broken egg-spoon. 'How can Pitt have such a spoon as this?' he asked of Lady Hester. 'Don't you know,' answered the lively lady; 'have you not yet discovered that Mr. Pitt sometimes uses very slight and weak instruments to effect his ends?'"

In 1797 the clouds gathered thickly about the political horizon.

The Order in Council suspending payments in specie was issued on the 26th of February, and Pitt's opponents immediately raised the cry that the public credit was destroyed, that England was dishonoured, pauperized, ruined. Pamphlets and speeches were rained down, in ferocious vehemence, on the minister's luckless head, but none, perhaps, conveyed a sting so bitter as the well known epigram:—

"Of Augustus and Rome
The poets still warble,
How he found it of brick
And left it of marble.

'So of England and Pitt,
Men may say without vapour,
That he found it of gold
And left it of paper."

The financial crisis was followed by the mutinies of the fleets at Spithead and the Nore—mutinies which were not more dishonourable to the discontented seamen than to the incapable naval administration whose offences, blunders, and injustice had originated it. And next rose the Irish difficulty. Through all, Pitt preserved an impassive brow and a serene countenance—as calm and immoveable as Marlborough in the agony of the battle, while Victory as yet hovered afar off.

In a succeeding memoir we shall dwell more fully upon the circumstances which attended the Legislative Union of Great Britain and Ireland. It was a measure of Imperial polity which Pitt was determined to carry. But he felt that to render it palatable to the Irish it must be accompanied by the emancipation of the Roman Catholics from their civil disabilities, and he authorized Cornwallis and Castlereagh to make it known that, if the Union were carried, it was his intention to introduce into the Imperial Legislature the measures necessary to effect that emancipation. Had he succeeded, how much misery would Ireland have been spared! How much closer would have been drawn the bonds of alliance between the sister nations! Unhappily, the king was a bigot and half a madman. His narrow

mind could admit but few ideas, and of these he most obstinately adhered to one; that he was bound by his coronation oath to refuse his assent to any bill which provided for the relief of the Roman Catholics from their civil disabilities. In vain his ministers argued. His intellect was incapable of following out any ratiocinative process. He could but maunder about his coronation oath; and Pitt and his ablest colleagues at length resigned.

It was difficult for the king to form a new administration. Fox, and those who sided with him, were of one accord with Pitt upon the question of Roman Catholic Emancipation. There were actually available only a few mediocre officials who had been attached to Pitt's administration, but held no offensive liberal opinions in favour of Papacy or Papists. At the head of these, as Premier, was placed Henry Addington, popularly nicknamed "The Doctor," whom Pitt's influence had raised to the dignified office of Speaker of the House of Commons. He was the best Speaker that had ever controlled the House; he proved the feeblest Minister that had ever governed the State. No orator, he was compelled to reply to Pitt, and Fox, and Windham. No wit, he was forced to endure the lively sarcasms of George Canning. No statesman, he was called upon to direct the affairs of a great empire at a period of unexampled anxiety. He was able, however, from two causes, to retain the chief power in his trembling hands for several months. He was the favourite of the king, whom his obsequiousness delighted. The people were weary of the war, and he secured a temporary popularity by concluding the Treaty of Amiens (A.D. 1802).

A change soon took place. Napoleon had little respect for treaties, and was bent upon humiliating England. After an armed truce, for it was nothing more, he insulted the English ambassador, flung into prison every Englishman travelling through France, and bombastically avowed his intention of "driving the leopard into the sea." The English nation at once perceived that it was no time for maudlin hopes of peace or drivelling attempts at negotiation. It had welcomed the Peace of Amiens, but now, when its honour, dignity, and independence were at stake, it welcomed war. *Malo mori quam fœdâri!* But as the full peril of its position loomed up before it, men cast uneasy glances on every side to discern, if they could, some experienced pilot capable of taking the helm in such stormy weather. No one had any confidence in Addington or his Cabinet. There was but one man who could unite the suffrages of the people, and that was William Pitt.

Of this truth Addington himself was not ignorant. At first, self-confident in his own great littleness, he attempted to share his power with Pitt, and proposed that while some ornamental peer should be First Lord of the Treasury and nominally head of the ministry, he and Pitt should hold places of equal importance, and virtually direct the administration. The son of Chatham scouted with free indignation so presumptuous a proposal, and treated the proposer with bitter contempt. "Which secretaryship did he offer you," asked Wilberforce of Pitt. "Really," was the reply, "I had not the curiosity to inquire." Addington then offered to yield the Premiership if, in other respects, the *personnel* of his ministry remained

unchanged. But Pitt declined to enter into any such agreement.

On the 16th of May, 1803, the king sent a message to the Commons, demanding their support in opposing the aggressive and encroaching policy of France. Pitt supported the ministry, and spoke with fervid eloquence against the ambition and perfidy of the French ruler. But if he supported the ministry in their war policy, it was evident that he had no particular affection for its chief or his colleagues, and, as the session advanced, his indirect attacks fell as heavily upon Addington as the more open assaults of Fox, Grenville, and Windham. He was unable to cope, for any length of time, with such formidable opponents, and finally, in the spring of 1804, he resigned office. Pitt was immediately summoned to the king's presence, and authorized to form a government.

Since the first outburst of the French revolution, a great change had come over men's minds. The passions which had originated in that remarkable outbreak no longer survived. There was no longer an exaggerated dread of reform lest it should lead to Jacobinism, nor a frenzied lust of change in imitation of the madness of French Conventions. The war, too, had changed its character. It was no longer Europe attempting to force a hateful system of government upon Republican France, but England contending against Imperial France and enslaved Europe for her liberties, her rights, her very existence. This was a time, then, when men of all parties might cordially unite in the service of their common country. With this view Pitt desired to compose an administration on the broadest possible basis, and proposed to place in a position, only

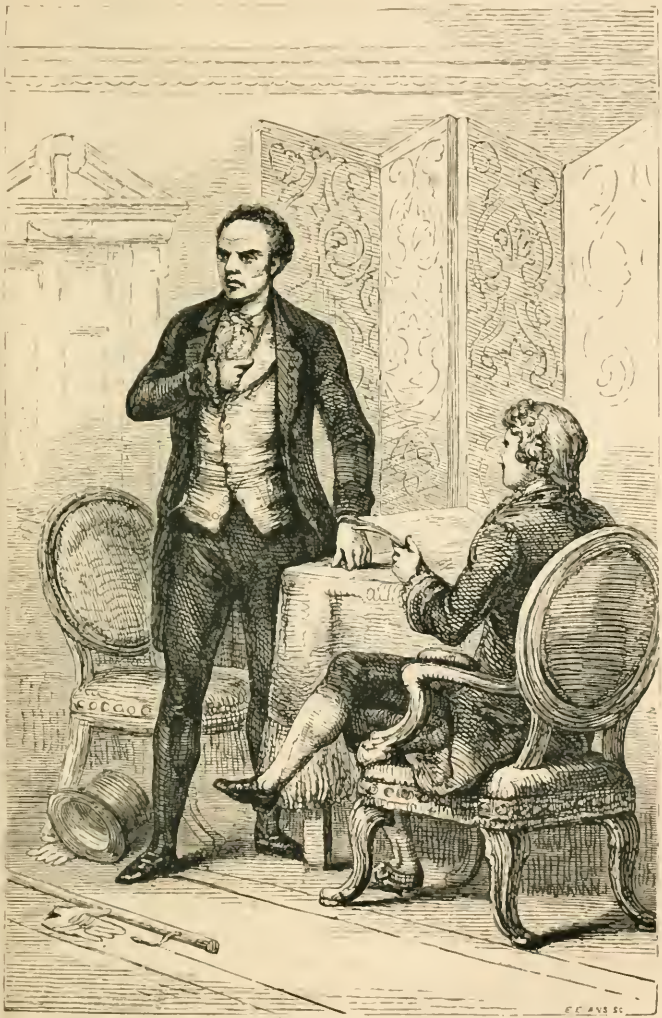
second to his own, his former rival, the generous and enthusiastic Fox.

But here again Pitt was doomed to be defeated by the obstinacy of the king. George III. would not have Fox, in spite of all Pitt's arguments and entreaties, and Fox's friends would not join Pitt unless they were accompanied by their beloved leader. They rightly argued that "a great constitutional principle was at stake, and that they would not take office while a man eminently qualified to render service to the commonwealth was placed under a ban merely because he was disliked at court." Pitt, therefore, was compelled to form his ministry out of his own small circle of political friends, and the wreck of Addington's government. The only colleagues whom he could rely upon in debate or in council were Dundas, who had been created Viscount Melville, Canning, Castlereagh, and Lord Harrowby.

The great minister's second period of government was a pitiful contrast in his feebleness and ill-success to the power, influence, and glory of his first administration. In foreign policy he returned to his old system, subsidies and coalitions, but not a gleam of fortune shone upon his efforts. It was in vain that he attempted to unite Europe against Napoleon. That mighty conqueror marched from victory to victory, and soon to the war with France was added war with Spain. At the same time Pitt received a heavy blow in the fall and impeachment of Viscount Melville, who was found guilty of improper transactions with respect to the public moneys; was censured by the House of Commons, ejected from office, and impeached before his peers of high crimes and misdemeanours. Melville

had been long associated with Pitt in office and in private life, and the discovery of his culpability struck the great minister to the heart.

It was now evident that Pitt's health was gradually sinking under the pressure of accumulated misfortunes. He could not rest at night. His food ceased to nourish him, and even port wine, his favourite beverage, no longer afforded him a stimulus. "Misery," it was said, emphatically, "was written in his face," and his pale, worn countenance wore an ominous expression of despair and unconquerable grief, which his friend Wilberforce significantly called *the Austerlitz look*. "He had staked everything," writes Lord Macaulay, "on a great venture. He had succeeded in forming another mighty coalition against the French ascendency. The united forces of Austria, Russia, and England might, he hoped, oppose an insurmountable barrier to the ambition of the common enemy. But the genius and energy of Napoleon prevailed. While the English troops were preparing to embark for Germany, while the Russian troops were slowly coming up from Poland, he, with rapidity unprecedented in modern war, moved a hundred thousand men from the shores of the ocean to the Black Forest, and compelled a great Austrian army to surrender at Ulm. To the first faint rumours of this calamity Pitt would give no credit. He was irritated by the alarms of those around him. 'Do not believe a word of it,' he said, 'it is all a fiction.' The next day he received a Dutch newspaper containing the capitulation. He knew no Dutch. It was Sunday, and the public offices were shut. He carried the paper to Lord Malmesbury, who had been minister in Holland, and Lord Malmesbury translated



Pitt received next day a Dutch newspaper containing the surrender of the Austrian army at Ulm, Lord Malmsbury translated it.—p. 192.

it. Pitt tried to bear up, but the shock was too great, and he went away with death in his face (A.D. 1805)."

Four days later the tidings of the victory of Trafalgar, which indisputably confirmed England's supremacy at sea, lit up a temporary excitement in the statesman's mind. Forty-eight hours afterwards came the 9th November, Lord Mayor's day, and Pitt and his colleagues, according to custom, dined at the Guildhall. On this occasion his popularity, revived by the great naval triumph which had filled the isles with enthusiastic joy, blazed out with all its early splendour. He was received on his road to the civic hall with shouts of welcome. In Cheapside the populace took his horses from his carriage, and drew it up King Street with exultant huzzas. His reception in the Guildhall was equally flattering, and his health was drank with unusual honours. In reply he said but little, but that little was singularly felicitous. The lord mayor had apostrophized him as "the Saviour of Europe." "I return you many thanks," said the minister, "for the honour you have done me, but Europe is not to be saved by any single man. England has saved herself by her exertions, and will, as I trust, save Europe by her example." These were the last words he ever uttered in public. While he lay at Bath, in December, vainly hoping to recruit his health for the ensuing parliamentary session, the fatal news of the defeat of Austerlitz arrived. The coalition he had formed with so much labour was broken; Austria was stricken to the ground, and almost all Europe knelt at the feet of Napoleon. It was Pitt's death blow. There was no longer any hope of his recovery, though he seems

to have been unaware of his condition, and he removed to his villa on Putney Heath, a dying man (11th January, 1806).

Some interesting details of the last few months of his career have been recorded by Earl Stanhope, from information supplied by the late Duke of Wellington. "Pitt died in January, 1806," said the duke, "and I met him at Lord Camden's, in Kent, and I think that he did not seem ill, in the November previous. He was then extremely lively and in good spirits. It is true that he was by way of being an invalid at that time. A great deal was always said about his taking his rides, for he used then to ride eighteen or twenty miles every day, and great pains were taken to send forward his luncheon, bottled porter, I think, and getting him a beefsteak or mutton chop ready at some placed fixed beforehand. That place was always mentioned to the party, so that those kept at home in the morning might join the ride there if they pleased. On coming home from these rides, they used to put on dry clothes, and to hold a cabinet, for all the party were members of the cabinet, except me, and, I think, the Duke of Montrose. At dinner Mr. Pitt drank little wine, but it was at that time the fashion to sup, and he then took a great deal of port wine and water. In the same month I also met Mr. Pitt at the lord mayor's dinner; he did not seem ill. On that occasion I remember he returned thanks in one of the best and neatest speeches I ever heard in my life. It was in very few words. The lord mayor had proposed his health as one who had been the Saviour of England, and would be the Saviour of the rest of Europe. Mr. Pitt then got up, disclaimed the compliment as applied

to himself, and added, 'England has saved herself by her exertions, and the rest of Europe will be saved by her example.' That was all; he was scarcely up two minutes, yet nothing could be more perfect.

"I remember," continued the duke, "another curious thing at that dinner. Erskine was there. Now Mr. Pitt had always over Erskine a great ascendency—the ascendency of terror. Sometimes, in the House of Commons, he could keep Erskine in check by merely putting out his hand or making a note. At this dinner, Erskine's health having been drunk, and Erskine rising to return thanks, Pitt held up his finger, and said to him across the table, 'Erskine, remember that they are drinking your health as a distinguished colonel of volunteers.' Erskine, who had intended, as we heard, to go off upon Rights of Juries, the State Trials, and other political points, was quite put out; he was awed like a school-boy at school, and in his speech kept strictly within the limits enjoined him."

Pitt reached Putney on the 11th November. Parliament was summoned to meet on the 21st, and the usual parliamentary dinner given by the First Lord of the Treasury, was appointed for the 20th. But the great minister was to appear no more on the stage where he had played so splendid a part, to mingle no more in the strife he loved so well. In vain he attempted to oppose the inroads of disease. He was compelled, at length, to retire to his bedroom. As he was led thither, accompanied by his niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, his glance fell upon a map of Europe suspended against the wall. "Roll up that map," he sighed, turning to his niece, "it will not be wanted

these ten years." On the 22nd his physicians announced that they could no longer entertain any hopes of his recovery. The fatal tidings were communicated to Pitt by his former preceptor, Pretyman, Bishop of Lincoln. He received them with composure, and listened attentively to the words of hope and consolation which the excellent prelate poured into his ear. But his mind began to give way. His brain wandered. Broken ejaculations relative to the condition of his country, and the perils that menaced her, occasionally escaped his faltering lips. Day by day he sank, and at last, early on the morning of the 23rd of January, 1806, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the day on which he had first taken his seat in Parliament, he expired. He was only in his 47th year, and yet, for nearly nineteen years, he had held the post of First Lord of the Treasury, and maintained in the British empire a political supremacy almost undisputed.

After lying in state for two days, the stateman's corpse was borne with a vast amount of solemn splendour to Westminster Abbey (February 22nd, 1806), followed by an illustrious train of princes and peers, councillors, bishops, and official dignitaries. "The grave of Pitt had been made near to the spot where his great father lay, near also to the spot where his great rival was soon to lie. The sadness of the assistants was beyond that of ordinary mourners. For he whom they were committing to the dust had died of sorrows and anxieties of which none of the survivors could be altogether without a share. Wilberforce, who carried the banner before the hearse, described the awful ceremony with deep feeling. As the coffin descended into the earth, he said, the eagle face of

Chatham from above seemed to look down with consternation into the dark house which was receiving all that remained of so much power and glory."

From this brief outline of his distinguished career, the reader will, perhaps, perceive that the *real* Pitt was very different in principle and policy from the *fictitious* Pitt. The statesman who resigned office because he could not effect the relief of the Roman Catholics from their civil disabilities, who advocated the repeal of the Test Act, who three times introduced into Parliament comprehensive measures of reform; who denounced the slave trade with vigorous eloquence, and was utterly opposed to protectionist monopolies; this is not the Pitt whom the zealots of party have loved to represent as the foe of progress and the enemy of liberalism. But if he was not what his antagonists represented him, no more did he really resemble the "pilot who weathered the storm" of his servile panegyrists. He was a great minister and a great orator, but not a great statesman. His character and capacity peculiarly qualified him for supreme power in a constitutional government during peaceful and prosperous times, but he was unfitted to cope with the difficulties of a crisis that demanded the utmost breadth of views, fixity of purpose, and wealth of resources. History, then, we believe, "will vindicate," to borrow once more the words of Lord Macaulay, "the real man from calumny disguised under the semblance of adulation, and will exhibit him as what he was, a minister of great talents, honest intentions, and liberal opinions, pre-eminently qualified, intellectually and morally, for the part of a parliamentary leader, and capable of administering with prudence and moderation the go-

vernment of a prosperous and tranquil country, but unequal to surprising and terrible emergencies, and liable, in such emergencies, to err grievously, both on the side of weakness and on the side of violence.*

* Encyclop. Britt.—Art. William Pitt, by Lord Macaulay. [See also Pretyman's and Tomline's Biographies; Massey's History of the Reign of George III.; the Temple Correspondence; the Auckland Correspondence, and Life of the Right Hon. William Pitt, by Earl Stanhope.]

THE MARQUIS OF LONDONDERRY,

(BETTER KNOWN AS LORD CASTLEREAGH).

(A.D. 1769—1822.)

"Sed viget ingenium, et magnos accinctus in usus
Fert quascunque vices."—STATIUS.

ROBERT STEWART, second Marquis of Londonderry, better known by his contemporaries and posterity as Lord Castlereagh, was born on the 18th of June, 1769. His father was Robert Stewart, of Ballylawn Castle, Ireland, who by successive governments was rewarded for his staunch Toryism, with the titles of Baron Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, and Earl of Londonderry. The family, as the name indicates, was originally of Scotch extraction, but had been settled in Ireland for nearly 150 years. Thus, to the phlegm, coolness, and indomitable perseverance of the sturdy Scot, were added the charm of manner, the hopefulness of temper, the plenitude of resources which characterize the ardent Celt, and in the subject of our present memoir it would seem that the best qualities of both nations were admirably blended.

The early years of Lord Castlereagh, for we take leave, throughout our sketch, to use the title which has become historical, were passed in his well-ordered family, under the watchful eyes of a father "conspicu-

ous for every manly and Christian virtue," and the tender guardianship of a mother whose abilities were far above the average. His education was carefully directed, and he acquired a considerable knowledge both of Latin and Greek. In his seventeenth year an incident occurred which illustrated both his courage and his powers of endurance. While out boating on Strangford Lough, with a companion only twelve years old, their frail skiff capsized, at a distance of three miles from the shore. Castlereagh finding that his young comrade could not swim, contrived to keep his head above water, until his friends came to their assistance. For upwards of an hour he remained in this dangerous position, and when rescued he was found quite paralyzed from the cold, while the lad whose life he had saved was actually insensible.

He was now removed to St. John's College, Cambridge, where he acquired the esteem of his masters by his attention to his studies, and the love of his compatriots by the grace and amiability of his manners. His person was remarkably handsome, and his address peculiarly fascinating. His courage was unimpeachable; his command over his countenance perfect, so that nature had qualified him to win the admiration of both sexes, and endowed him with almost every faculty that would fit him for "a ruler of men." He left the University before he was nineteen (1788), and for two years occupied himself in a tour on the Continent, where he studied men and manners with greater keenness than is customary at his age, and showed a warmer inclination for the politics of the day than for the vicious pleasures of great cities.

In 1790 he attained his majority, and almost im-

mediately entered public life, to commence that stormy and yet glorious career which is inseparably associated with our British annals during so many eventful years. He took his seat in the Irish Parliament, which then assembled in Dublin, as one of the representatives of Downshire, having secured his election by a liberal expenditure of hard cash and hard blows. The young politician straightway announced himself a reformer. He vigorously supported, in 1793, the Act which provided for the admission of Roman Catholics to the privilege of the franchise, and gave them a share in parliamentary representation. He was prepared, like William Pitt, to go further—as both justice and expediency demanded—and to concede to the Roman Catholics a full emancipation from the disabilities under which they laboured; but with this great reform he coupled the condition of an intimate alliance, a thorough Union between England and Ireland, which should do away with the danger and difficulty of a separate representation, and merge the English and Irish Parliaments in one Imperial Legislature. The Irish Parliament, as at that time constituted, was entirely subject to Protestant ascendancy, representing the small minority of Irish Protestantism. He knew it was in vain to expect from this minority either justice or generosity in its dealings with its Papist enemies. On the other hand, if the Parliament were thrown open, by Catholic Emancipation, to the Roman Catholic majority, as little justice or generosity might be expected in its treatment of the hated Protestants. It was simply an exchange of evils, an alternation of bigotries. But were the Irish Parliament merged in the larger, more powerful, and more independent legislature of Great Britain, it ap-

peared to Castlereagh that while the Irish members would have their due influence in the councils of the empire, they would be restrained by the good sense and calm resolution of the English and Scotch representatives from measures of fruitless persecution and religious tyranny. He declared, therefore, that the Union was the only effectual panacea for Irish disorders, and devoted himself to carry out a policy which he believed as beneficial for his country as it was for the British empire.

Meanwhile, let us record that in 1793 he accepted a commission as lieutenant-colonel in the Londonderry Militia—the militia regiments having been called out by government as a precaution against the treasonable efforts of the United Irishmen, who were notoriously in league with the French Jacobins. He devoted himself to his official duties with characteristic ardour, and acquired a respectable knowledge of the details of the military profession.

In April 1794 he married a daughter of the Earl of Buckinghamshire, a lady of great beauty, great wit, and singular fascination of manner. To the last their union was a union of affection and esteem, and he treated his lovely wife with all the deference of a courtier of the *ancien régime*. Their entertainments were rendered peculiarly attractive by the beauty and charming address of the hostess, and the chivalrous courtesy of the host, and Lady Castlereagh's social sway was not less remarkable than her lord's political influence.

In 1796, his father, now Viscount Castlereagh, was raised to the Earldom of Londonderry, and he himself was rewarded, for his services to government, with the

post of Keeper of the Privy Seal of Ireland. In this capacity he really discharged the duties of Chief Secretary, an office to which he succeeded in the following year, on the resignation of Mr. Pelham. It was an unquiet time. England was plunged in the throes of the great Revolutionary war. An invasion of Ireland by a French army was threatened, and the government knew that the Jacobins would be welcomed by a large body of Irish republicans. Yet, with wonderful intrepidity, Castlereagh resolved, in the face of every obstacle, to carry his favourite project of a Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland. In this he was steadfastly supported by his great chief, William Pitt. Through ill report and good he persevered; and yet the dangers he confronted were such as might well have dismayed a less resolute and self-reliant man. "Roman Catholics and Protestants everywhere joining hands and storing up arms for a general rising against their rulers; Protestants and Roman Catholics ere long harrying each other's homes, and hunting each other to a cruel death; Irish militiamen distinguishing themselves for butchery, plunder, and readiness to run away; a few weak regiments of the line attempting, with the aid of a few thousand English militia, to do the work cut out for a large army; treason, havoc, bloodshed, famine, raging more or less throughout the land; French fleets hovering about the Irish coast, and a small body of French troops driving before it a much larger force of volunteers and militia at Castlebar; the northern rebellion of 1797, followed by the far more fearful rising of 1798 in the south; wholesale massacres at Wexford, Scullabogue, and elsewhere, avenged by a wholesale slaughter of the rebel runaways from the rout of Vinegar

Hill; such, in few words, was the picture which poor Ireland presented up to the close of 1798. By that time the neck of the rebellion had been fairly broken, but many months had yet to pass before peace and order could be thoroughly restored to a country where old antipathies of race and creed had been wrought up to a pitch of unutterable fierceness, by a long course of wrong-doing, real or fancied, or either side."*

It does not belong to us to trace the able operations by which Lord Castlereagh and the lord lieutenant, Lord Cornwallis, gradually prevailed against a most formidable phalanx. Rebellion was put down, and the rebel leaders expiated their folly and their crime on the gibbet, or in life-long servitude in the penal settlements of Australia. Then commenced the parliamentary campaign, conducted by Castlereagh with consummate ability and imperturbable coolness. He was libelled, he was ridiculed, he was threatened. But neither threats, jests, nor libels could swerve him one hair's-breadth from his settled purpose. Some of his opponents he bribed by money, others by peerages, sinecures, snug places, and promotions. To some, such as Grattan and Plunket, he opposed a calm brow and a convincing logic. His temper was never ruffled, his courage never daunted; his coolness never degenerated into insolence, nor his courtesy into servile pliancy. Every debate was a tempest, but it did not shake his nerves or perturb his mind; and at length, on the 7th of June, 1800, his patience and his pluck were rewarded by one of the greatest triumphs ever achieved by a British statesman—the Bill of Union was passed by a majority of sixty-five voices.

* "Dublin University Magazine," March 1862.

Both Cornwallis and Castlereagh had regarded as a necessary consequence of the Union the emancipation of the Roman Catholics from their civil disabilities. This was also the opinion of Pitt, and he authorised his subordinates to hold out this great measure of relief as an inducement to the Catholics to support the Union. Having carried the Union, Pitt and Castlereagh were anxious to redeem their pledges, and proposed to introduce into the Imperial Legislature the necessary bills. But they met with a sudden obstacle on which not even *their* sagacity had calculated—an obstacle which proved insuperable—the bigoted obstinacy of the king. The narrow mind of George III. could comprehend but little, and see to no great distance, but to what it *did* comprehend, it adhered with wonderful tenacity; and the pious monarch was willing to lose his crown rather than give his assent to a measure which he believed to be in direct antagonism to his solemn coronation oath. Neither the eloquence of Pitt nor the logic of Castlereagh could shake his convictions; and as the sovereign refused to fulfil the pledges they had given to their adherents, both ministers resigned their offices.

They were succeeded by the Addington Cabinet. At this period, Castlereagh, over-worked, worn out by his long and desperate struggle, and disheartened by the king's narrow-minded obstinacy, fell seriously ill with a nervous fever, which for some weeks kept his friends in a state of great alarm. He recovered, however, sufficiently to be able to take his seat in the first Imperial Parliament, held in 1801, and speedily distinguished himself by the lucidity of his speeches and the breadth of his views. He laid down a plan for the military defence of Ireland; suggested an equitable method of

commuting tithes, and concentrated into a brief but forcible State paper the most telling arguments in favour of Catholic emancipation. So highly were his administrative talents, his courage, and general capacity appreciated, that Addington was anxious to include him among his colleagues, and offered him a post in which his genius might be available to the ministry, while he would not be called upon to oppose the claims of the Catholics. Castlereagh became President of the Board of Control.

In this capacity he showed all the qualities of a statesman. His cordial and unselfish support was given to the policy of the then Governor-general of India—the able brother of the Duke of Wellington—the sagacious and far-seeing Marquis Wellesley, who was engaged in the subjugation of the hostile Mahrattas, and yet hampered at every step by the foolish restrictions and unmeaning orders of the Court of Directors of the East India Company. He lent to the marquis all the weight of his influence, and resolutely opposed the interference of the directors, recognizing the great truth which our statesmen have recently adopted as the principle of Colonial management—that our vast dependencies cannot be governed from Downing Street, but only by their local administrators.

Addington, in 1804, was succeeded by Pitt, whom the voice of the nation had unanimously recalled to power. Under his old chief, Castlereagh retained his post at the Board of Control, until the retirement of Earl Camden enabled Pitt to place him in the position for which he was best adapted—the Ministry of War. "Here," says an able biographer, "Lord Castlereagh found room for the display of those military talents

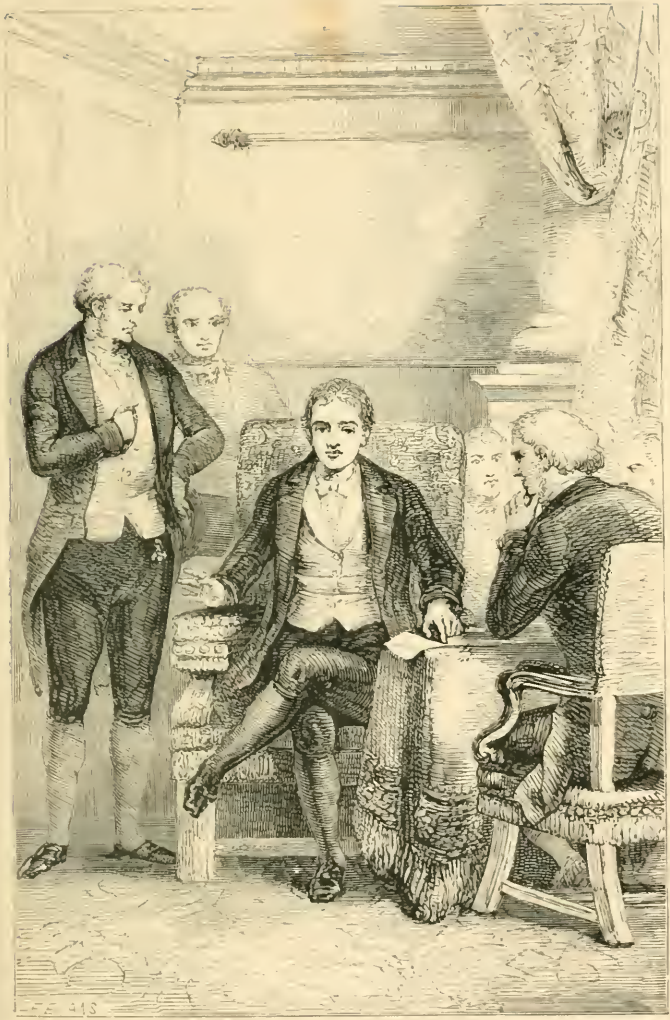
which his Irish experiences had first drawn out. His plan for an attack on the Boulogne flotilla wanted nothing, it seems, to ensure its success but guns of longer range than were then known to the English navy. The zeal and judgment he showed in despatching body after body of British troops to a tack France on the side of Northern Germany would, in all likelihood, have turned back the tide of French conquest ten years before its time, if Prussian hesitation, following on the sudden blow which Napoleon dealt the Austrian arms at Austerlitz, had not broken the strength of that European coalition which Pitt had striven so hard to set in movement against the common foe. Knowing what British soldiers could really do, Lord Castlereagh had prepared to send out from these islands a force of sixty thousand men, which, with the aid of ten or twenty thousand Hanoverians, would have done memorable service against the left wing of the French army." But the tidings of the victory of Austerlitz, and the heavy blow thus aimed at the heart of Austria, broke the spirit of the statesman who had so long stood at the helm, and guided the vessel of the State—*navis reipublicæ*—through so many menacing storms. Pitt never recovered from the shock, but with his soul still clinging to the fortunes of his beloved country, sank into the grave, on the 23rd January, 1806.

The death of Pitt threw the reins of power, for a few months, into the hands of his great rival, Charles James Fox, and Castlereagh retired from office. The new ministers were by no means anxious to prolong the war, if any reasonable terms of peace could be secured, and were unwilling and unable to prosecute the vigorous policy of their predecessors. But Fox soon followed

Pitt to an untimely grave, and in the new administration Castlereagh resumed his post as Secretary at War.

His first great *coup d'essai* was a success. Bonaparte had now compelled or cajoled the Northern Powers into joining his Continental system, with the object of closing every port in Europe against English ships and English goods, and forming a naval coalition which should shatter English supremacy at sea. The Danish fleet, which was of considerable force, and in admirable condition, would form an excellent nucleus for the great naval demonstration which Napoleon meditated. By the secret articles of the famous Treaty of Tilsit, it was agreed that France, Russia, and Spain should ally themselves against England; that Denmark, Sweden, and Portugal should be invited to join the league; and that if they refused, their fleets should be seized by force. Thus it was intended that a vast naval coalition should be formed, whose right wing, composed of the fleets of Russia, Denmark, and Sweden, would number forty sail of the line; the centre, French and Dutch, fifty sail; and the left wing, formed by the French squadron from Toulon, the Russian from the Black Sea, and the Spanish and Portuguese, forty sail—in all, one hundred and thirty sail of the line, against the one hundred and one which the British had in commission, and which were scattered over every sea. Happily for England, whose very existence was menaced by this formidable confederacy, the British Government* obtained private intelligence of the secret articles of the Tilsit treaty, and, with prompt resolution, set to work to frustrate

* The Prince Regent of Portugal revealed the particulars to the Prince Regent of England, who, in his turn, communicated them to his ministers.



Lord Castlereagh explaining his Plan for the Seizure of the Danish Fleet. P. 209.

the imperial project. It was no time for hesitation, no time for international formalities. If a blow was struck, it must be struck suddenly, swiftly, secretly, and with full force. Castlereagh was equal to the emergency. With the concurrence of his colleagues, he resolved on the seizure of the Danish fleet, to prevent its falling into Napoleon's hands, and he dared to do this without the usual formal declaration of war. Thirty thousand men were placed under the command of General Lord Cathcart, and a powerful fleet assembled by Lord Gambier.

To the utter surprise of the Danes, this formidable expedition suddenly appeared before Copenhagen. The town was furiously bombarded for three days, when the Danish court supplicated terms of peace, and the British commanders had the gratification of escorting to England, in triumph, the whole Danish navy, consisting of eighteen ships of the line, besides frigates, sloops, and gunboats, and a vast quantity of naval and military stores. A demonstration against Sweden secured the alliance of the Swedish navy, and with a small squadron of five men-of-war, the Russian fleet was securely blockaded in Cronstadt. Thus, by one skilful blow, Napoleon's schemes were completely frustrated, and England's naval supremacy incontestably established. Both at home and abroad, however, as the secret articles of the Tilsit treaty were not known, and the English government could not reveal their acquaintance with them, the bombardment of Copenhagen and the seizure of the Danish fleet were the theme of angry comment and violent censure. But Posterity has done justice to the able and intrepid statesman who quietly endured a temporary disgrace in the calm confidence that he had

secured the power and liberty of England, by his energy, foresight, and determination.

To avert a similar blow at the Portuguese fleet, which he feared would be voluntarily given up to the English government, Napoleon now directed Junot, the chief of his army in Spain, to cross into Portugal, and descend upon Lisbon. Meanwhile, a British squadron escorted the Portuguese royal family to their temporary home in the Brazils, and a British army, under Sir Arthur Wellesley, whose surpassing military genius Castlereagh was among the first to recognize, landed in Portugal and achieved two brilliant victories at Rolica and Vimieira (August 1808). Junot was forced into the Convention of Cintra—a convention which, though it delivered Portugal from the French, was considered in England an act of injudicious lenity, and occasioned a popular tempest of extraordinary violence. Less fortunate were the operations of Sir John Moore, who redeemed his errors, however, by the victory of Corunna and his glorious death, and by that victory secured the safety of his gallant little army.

Castlereagh and Wellesley, however, clearly perceived that it was in the Peninsula the heaviest and most successful blows could be inflicted upon Napoleon's empire; and the war minister determined to direct another expedition to the shores of Portugal and place at its head the victor of Assaye and Vimieira. To the close of the Peninsular war Castlereagh continued the warm and energetic supporter of the great duke, and in the Cabinet never failed to urge his claims and countenance his plans.

At the same time that a British army was flung upon the French in Portugal, the war minister's ac-

tive mind contemplated another attempt against the enemy in a different quarter, and upon even a more formidable scale. This was the famous Walcheren Expedition, an ably conceived enterprise whose only fault was one which Englishmen are not very ready to forgive—its want of success. The conception was admirable, but Castlereagh was unfortunate in the agents upon whom its development rested.

Napoleon was probably in all his career never in a position of greater peril than after his reverse at Aspern. With a dispirited army, in the face of a foe flushed by temporary success, eight hundred miles from France, and surrounded by populations which nourished towards him and his soldiers feelings of the bitterest hostility! Castlereagh's design then was to make the island of Walcheren, which lies at the mouth of the Scheldt, a basis of operations against Antwerp, whose garrison at this time barely exceeded 2000 men, and against the large fleet—38 ships of the line—then lying near it. Antwerp taken, the British troops could move onwards in Napoleon's rear, raising against him the inhabitants of the countries through which they passed. The scheme was an able one, and, if ably carried out, might have rendered Waterloo unnecessary.

But its projector was doomed to meet with obstacles at every step. His colleagues were indisposed to accept a scheme of such boldness and vast proportions, and the consent of the cabinet was refused until it was almost too late in the year for the expedition to sail. Nevertheless, Antwerp might still have been carried had the British been led by an Abercromby, a Moore, or a Wellesley. But the king insisted upon selecting the commander-in-chief himself, and selected one of the

most incapable generals in the British army—the Earl of Chatham, whose only claim to distinction was that he was the son of the great Earl of Chatham and the elder brother of William Pitt. The naval forces were under the command of Sir Richard Strachan, and the dilatoriness of the two leaders has been immortalized in the well-known epigram:—

> "The Earl of Chatham, with sword undrawn,
> Stood waiting for Sir Richard Strachan;
> Sir Richard, longing to be at 'em,
> Stood waiting for the Earl of Chatham."

The expedition entered the Scheldt on the 30th of July, and the army disembarked on the Isle of Walcheren a few days later. After some tedious delays it laid siege to Flushing, under whose walls the Earl of Chatham wasted several weeks, so that when, at last, Flushing was taken, and the army prepared to move upon Antwerp, it was found that the enemy had availed themselves of the time so generously allowed them, to throw a large force into the city, and surround it with formidable defences. Stricken down by disease, and especially by a fatal miasmatic fever, the British army was reduced from 40,000 to 24,000 men, and an attack upon Antwerp was impossible. There was no resource but to retreat to the Isle of Walcheren, where the fleet re-embarked the fever-smitten remnants of one of the finest armies which had ever quitted the British shores.

A storm of indignation broke upon the head of the unfortunate Minister at War. Though none of the errors which had caused the failure of the expedition were his, though he had been thwarted at every step, and especially in the important matter of the choice of a commander, the press and the legislature poured out

all their acrimony upon him; and his colleagues, who had long felt jealous of his superiority, gladly availed themselves of the opportunity to rid themselves of his presence in the Cabinet. He was compelled to resign, and the journals in the interest of the government did not scruple to represent him as retiring on account of his share in the failure at Walcheren. One of his colleagues, George Canning, behaved with a duplicity and a tergiversation that provoked Castlereagh into sending him a challenge. The two opponents met on Wimbledon Common, and Mr. Canning was severely wounded. Both ministers then resigned their places, and, until February 1812, Lord Castlereagh simply appeared in the Commons as one of the representatives of Downshire. But even in an unofficial capacity his influence upon the House was considerable, and that influence was steadily employed in support of Wellington's policy against the French, and in urging the vigorous prosecution of hostilities both by land and sea.

In February 1812, Lord Castlereagh returned to power as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the adminstration headed by Mr. Perceval. He continued in the same office, under Lord Liverpool, after Mr. Perceval's assassination by the madman Bellingham; but virtually became the leading spirit of the Cabinet, as he was officially leader of the House of Commons. His career as Foreign Minister was no less successful than his administration of the War Office. He brought to bear upon the discharge of his new duties the same energy of character, breadth of view, and fixity of purpose. In the House he exercised a remarkable influence. He was no orator; his language was often vague, and generally marked by singular looseness of

construction and faultiness of metaphor, as in the well-known phrase, "the chief *feature* upon which this question hinges." But his reasoning was clear and close; his ideas were original, bold, and suggestive; his address impressive; and his appearance commanding. He was not only an experienced debater, but a successful statesman; not only an English minister, but an English gentleman; and he was almost as much respected by his foes as he was beloved by his friends.

He was now to display his capacity as statesman and diplomatist on a different arena. Wellington's successes in the Peninsula had infused fresh hope and revived energy in the hearts of those European nations which had so long groaned under the domination of Napoleon. At the news that the English had crossed the Bidassoa, and trod upon the sacred soil of France, Europe aroused herself once more, and met her great oppressor face to face at Leipzic. A three days' battle terminated in the total defeat of the French army. With shouts of triumphant exultation the Allies crossed the Rhine, and speedily penetrated the Imperial territory (A.D. 1814). Never had Napoleon's genius shone more brightly than in these days of deadly peril. In the face of an overwhelming force he contested every inch of French soil. He moved from one point to another with a swiftness which seemed like ubiquity; but gradually the circle of steel which surrounded him drew closer and closer, and on the last day of March Paris was given up to the Allies.

At this moment of success the greatest danger threatened the Allied cause. The different powers were actuated by different motives—by jealousy, revenge, fear; and of their constant dissensions no one

knew better than Napoleon how to take advantage. It was necessary that the calmness and moderation of English policy should make themselves felt in the deliberations of the Allies, and who could so well explain and enforce it as he who had for so many years virtually directed it? In this emergency the British government took a wise though unprecedented course, in despatching their distinguished Foreign Minister to the ever-shifting head-quarters of the Allied Sovereigns, commissioned with full powers to bind his government to whatever course he thought best, either of war or peace. Lord Castlereagh successfully opposed the desire of the Emperor Alexander to break off all negotiations with Napoleon; but with equal steadiness he resisted the proposal of the French Emperor that he should be left in possession of the frontier of the Alps, the Rhine, and the Meuse, which, by preserving to him Chambery, Mayence, and Antwerp, would have afforded to him at any favourable moment the means of resuming his scheme of European conquest or domination. When, finally, the success of the Allies became ensured, when Paris was occupied by the Allied troops, and Napoleon remitted to a gilded captivity at Elba, Lord Castlereagh repaired to Vienna, and there, at that famous Congress, whose projects have of late years been so rudely overthrown, represented Great Britain with indubitable talent and considerable success.

The difficulties with which he and his coadjutors had to contend were of a formidable character. Napoleon's career of conquest had been a deluge. He had effaced the boundaries of nations, destroyed the landmarks which ages had recognized; swept away in a torrent of fire and flame the dynasties which antiquity

had made venerable. The old order had changed, and given way to the new. There were new dynasties, new principalities, new nations. But now the flood had subsided; the waters were abated from off the earth, and Europe was to be reconstructed. How far were the old boundaries to be re-established? How far was the new order of things to be respected? These were the questions which troubled the minds of the members of the Congress of Vienna, and it will surprise many English readers to learn that these questions were debated by Lord Castlereagh in a spirit of thorough liberality. Take, for instance, the Polish question. Those readers who have been taught to regard Castlereagh as a bigoted Tory, a devoted adherent to arbitrary power, and the sworn foe of constitutional freedom, will be astonished to learn that one of the English minister's most cherished projects was the re-establishment of Poland as an independent kingdom. Why he failed we shall show—not in the verbose language of Castlereagh's recent biographer, Sir Archibald Alison, but in the forcible summary of that biographer's critic in "Blackwood's Magazine:"*—"Lord Castlereagh proposed that the dismemberment of Poland should be annulled—that the three Powers (Russia, Prussia, and Austria) which had taken part in the final partition of that kingdom should give up the provinces which they had thereby acquired, and that a united Poland should be re-erected as an independent kingdom. The Czar Alexander had no objection to the reunion of the Polish provinces of Austria and Prussia to the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and to the re-creation of a

* "Blackwood's Mag.," March 1862. See also Alison's "Lives of Lord Castlereagh and Sir Charles Stewart," vol. ii.

kingdom of Poland; but he strenuously resisted Lord Castlereagh's proposal that Poland should be independent, and maintained that it must exist as an integral part of his empire, with himself for king and his successors after him. By either plan Prussia was to be compensated for the loss of Posen, by acquiring the forfeited sovereignty* of Saxony. Such were the counter-projects upon which the Congress had to decide. Prussia sided with Russia. Austria approved of Lord Castlereagh's proposal for a united and independent Poland, and as resolutely opposed the project of the Czar for a united and dependent Poland; but she resisted (what both projects involved) the cession of Saxony to her Germanic rival Prussia. France was utterly indifferent about Poland; she cared little about the aggrandizement of the power of distant Russia; but she was violently opposed to the annexation of Saxony, as that would strengthen her own immediate neighbour Prussia. The two Northern Powers were in perfect record, and, cordially supported by Prussia, and elated with his military power and renown, the Russian Alexander was resolved to carry his point by force of arms. The other powers were disunited, England and Austria alone being earnest in their opposition to the Czar's scheme of re-uniting all the Polish provinces under the Russian crown, and even these two powers were at variance on the question of Saxony. War was on the point of breaking out. In this emergency Lord Castlereagh, in order to escape the difficulty about Saxony, had to give up his plan for a united and

* Saxony had been raised by Napoleon from an electorate to a kingdom, and her king remained faithful to his benefactor to the last.

independent Poland, on condition that Austria, France, and the lesser German Powers should unite with England in opposing the Prusso-Russian scheme of a united Poland under the crown of the Czars, and should consent to such a small cession of territory to Prussia (retaining her Polish province of Posen) as would raise her to the position she held before the campaign of Jena. In the face of this confederacy, and when the armies had been mustered and the plans of campaign arranged on both sides, the Emperor Alexander at the last moment gave way, and abandoned his project of re-uniting all the Polish provinces into a kingdom of which he was to be the head. In the final settlement the Grand Duchy of Warsaw was made a separate kingdom, with a constitution of its own, but with the Czar for king; Prussia retained the province of Posen, with its population of a million souls, and was compensated for the loss inflicted on her by Napoleon by receiving a portion of Saxony containing 800,000 inhabitants, the remainder of Saxony being given back to its captive king. Assuredly, at the present time, when Europe has been confronted by the Polish question, we have every reason to be proud of the part which Lord Castlereagh took on that question in 1815, and very sincerely to regret that the circumstances of the time did not permit of his accomplishing his bold, statesman-like, and liberal project of restoring Poland to a united and independent position among the powers of Europe."

There are other points in the Treaties of Vienna on which the verdict of the present age would, perhaps, be less favourable. We may regret the recognition of the Italian provinces of Austria, Lombardy, and Venetia:

but in justice to Lord Castlereagh it should be remembered that he was but following out the traditional policy of England—a policy even now accepted by some of our ablest statesmen—to strengthen Austria as a counterpoise to the ever-aggressive power of France. One thing must be placed to the credit of his memory, that he endeavoured, though in vain, to bind the Continental Powers to a common course of action against the infamous slave-trade.

But while these weighty questions agitated the statesmen and warriors, kings and diplomatists, assembled at Vienna, a storm was rising in the little Isle of Elba, of which not even the acutest amongst them had the feeblest prognostications. And while these sessions were about to close, while Castlereagh, having landed at Dover four days before, was preparing for the ensuing parliamentary campaign, the astounding tidings broke upon their ears that Napoleon had escaped from Elba, had landed in the Gulf of San Juan, March 1st, 1815, and that already the tricolour had put to flight the fleur-de-lis of the Bourbons. The enthusiastic plaudits of the House of Commons were yet ringing in Lord Castlereagh's ears when the news reached him. But England and her rulers were not unworthy of the crisis. Europe, too, was resolved that the conqueror should no longer wear the imperial purple. The Duke of Wellington was appointed to the command in chief of the allied armies, and set out, in the calm confidence of genius, to measure himself against Napoleon. On the memorable field of Waterloo the "sun of Austerlitz" set luridly in blood, and the wild, mad dream of the "Hundred Days" was fatally dissipated.

Castlereagh was once more despatched to the Conti-

nent to complete, by diplomacy, what the sword had so successfully begun. He reached Paris on the 7th of July, and joined Wellington in repressing the vindictive proceedings of Blucher and the Prussians against the Parisians. He also aided in securing that final settlement which, for nearly half a century, preserved the peace of Europe, and it was in a great measure owing to his influence that the wise step was taken of exiling Napoleon to St. Helena, and of thus terminating for ever his hopes of future conquest.

After a prolonged fever comes the panic of exhausted nature. Great Britain, during her fifteen years' struggle, had made unparalleled exertions, had cheerfully endured the most terrible sacrifices, supported by the inspiration of victory and the potent instinct of self-preservation. But upon the cessation of the great efforts which had braced up her nerves, the languor of disease swept suddenly over her exhausted frame. Commerce seemed stricken by a mortal blow; trade was paralyzed; enterprise lay dormant. A people in want is always discontented, and a bad harvest added to the sufferings, and increased the murmurs of the nation. The labour market was overstocked, and the resumption of a metallic currency, against the opinion of the government, still further depressed trade, and paralyzed speculation. Riotous assemblages now gathered in the principal manufacturing towns, and these were incited by unprincipled demagogues to acts of disorder and violence (1817-19.) Lord Castlereagh met the crisis with his usual vigour and cool courage. He was a statesman of the old school, guided by the old principles of government, with a lofty disdain of the "mob" and of those ideas of reform

which, in 1819, were considered revolutionary and Jacobinical. He, therefore, employed force to crush discontent, and struck terror into the hearts of the people by measures of severe repression, when a statesman of the school of to-day would have warmed them into loyalty by measures of conciliation. The resumption of cash payments was postponed for two years longer. The Habeas Corpus Act was suspended. Spies trafficked in the lives and liberties of their victims. The infamous Six Acts subjected Great Britain to a species of martial law, and at Peterloo, near Manchester, the yeomanry were called out, and plunging into a panic-smitten multitude of men, women, and children, perpetrated a fearful massacre. Thus the insurrection—for it almost amounted to an insurrection—was crushed, but with an expenditure of life, and a disregard of law and equity, which we cannot but contemplate with indignation. It may, however, be urged in extenuation of the part which Castlereagh and his colleagues played in this miserable tragedy, that they had not yet recovered from the fanatical horror of "Jacobinism" and "Revolution" which had so long pervaded the aristocratic and middle classes of England, and that, as yet, those noble principles of true statesmanship which counsel and promote the obliteration of class prejudices, and the cultivation of wise and kindly feelings between rich and poor were little understood.

But if thus arbitrary in his administration of home affairs, Castlereagh was actuated by a more liberal spirit in his foreign policy. He protested against the alliance between Prussia and Russia, whose thinly-disguised object was the extinction of liberal principles throughout Europe. He anticipated Canning in his recognition of

the independence of the Spanish American colonies,—that recognition which prompted Canning's grandiose declaration, "I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old." But the best exposition of his policy, and the most striking vindication of his character and genius as a statesman, are to be found in the elaborate instructions which he drew up for the guidance of the Duke of Wellington at the Congress of Verona. The two main question to be debated were the Turkish and the Spanish, and these were treated by Castlereagh in a liberal and statesmanlike spirit:—

"With regard to the Turkish question, as well external as internal, the course to be pursued is this: All possible measures are in the first instance to be tried to reconcile the differences between Russia and Turkey. These connect themselves partly with the right of protection, which by treaty Russia is authorized to afford to Christianity in Turkey, and partly with certain restrictions which the Porte has recently imposed upon the navigation of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. When this object has been so far attained as to avert the risk of actual collision between the two Powers, *then, and not till then,* the condition of Greece is to be considered. Now, Greece has gained of late so much in the contest that it is not easy to avoid dealing with the government which she has set up as with a government *de facto.* Still you will, as British plenipotentiary, be cautious to act with great circumspection in the matter; and, above all, stand aloof from any engagement with the Allies, either to accept the Greek government as that of an independent State, or to compel the submission of Greece herself to the Porte by force of arms.

"But by far the most tangled web of the whole is that in which Spain and her affairs are wrapped up; and not the least so, in that portion of it which embraces her relations with the revolted colonies, and the effect thereby produced upon the commerce of the world. As to the form of government which she has of late established for herself in Europe, *that is a matter with which, in the opinion of the English Cabinet, no foreign Power has the smallest right to interfere.* It rests entirely with the King of Spain and his subjects to settle their differences, if they have any, between themselves. And this important truth you will urge with all your influence upon the Allies, *and especially upon France.* But the case of the revolted colonies is different. It is evident, from the course which events have taken, that *their recognition as independent States has become merely a question of time.* Over by far the greater part of them Spain has lost all hold; and it has been found necessary, in order to admit their merchant-vessels into English ports, to alter the navigation laws, both of England and Spain. You will accordingly advocate a removal of the difficulty on this principle, that every province which has actually established its independence should be recognized; that with provinces in which the war still went on, no relation should be established; and that where negotiations are in progress between a revolted colony and the mother country, relations with the colony should be suspended till the results of such negotiations are known. All this, however, is to be brought about only after a full explanation with Spain herself, and entirely by independent action. There is to be no concert with France, or Russia, or any other extraneous Power in order to effect it. The policy

projected is exclusively English and Spanish, and between England and Spain, and between them alone its course is to be settled. Other nations may, or may not, come into the views which England entertains; but upon their approval or disapproval of her views, England is not in any way to shape her conduct.

"Besides these more general questions, England has some of her own, which the statesman who is to represent her at the Congress will bring forward. Foremost among them all is the suppression of the slave-trade, either by a general declaration from the Allies that it should be treated as piracy, or by obtaining from them an engagement that they would not admit into their markets any article of colonial produce which was the result of slave labour."

We have now approached the close of Lord Londonderry's eventful career. For twenty years he had borne a heavier burthen than falls to the lot of most men, and had animated and directed the councils of the empire throughout the greatest struggle in which it had ever been involved. The overworked mind at length gave way. Symptoms of febrile excitement, of mental incoherency, became distressingly frequent. For some days prior to his melancholy death, the despatches which he wrote were illegible, though his handwriting was generally bold, distinct, and regular. "His nature," writes his latest biographer, "seemed changed; instead of his usual gentleness of manner and placidity of demeanour, he became querulous and suspicious. The king was the first to observe a decided alteration, and after one of the last Cabinet Councils, at which Lord Castlereagh was present, before his departure for Scotland, his Majesty was so much struck with it that

he wrote to Lord Liverpool, mentioning the circumstance, and urging the necessity of immediate precaution and medical advice. The Duke of Wellington, too, who was warmly attached to Lord Castlereagh, and entertained the highest respect for his character, as well as affection for his person, soon after observed it. He spoke to his lordship on the subject, and advised him to send for his family physician, which he promised to do, but did not. At length, on the 9th of August, the duke was so much struck with his manner, that, after walking with him to the Foreign Office, he went to his medical attendant, Dr. Bankhead, and not finding him at home, wrote a letter expressing his apprehensions, and not obscurely hinting at mental delusion. Dr. Bankhead no sooner received this alarming intelligence than he went out to Cray Farm, Lord Castlereagh's seat in Kent, and, seeing the Duke of Wellington's fears too well founded, he slept in the house the next two nights, and gave orders to his valet to remove the razors from his lordship's dressing-case, and take other precautions against self-destruction. He did so without being observed, but unfortunately, not recollecting that there was a penknife belonging to the case in one of the drawers of the washing-stand, he neglected to secure it. The consequences were fatal. During the 10th and 11th of August he remained in bed, wandering, but expressing no alarming intentions On the morning of the 12th of August, Lady Londonderry, who was with him, reported that he had passed a restless night, and that he wished to see Dr. Bankhead, who was in an adjoining apartment. When Dr. Bankhead went into his dressing-room, he found him standing opposite the window, looking out, with his

hands above his head, with his throat cut, and bleeding profusely. Consciousness, as is often the case, returned with the flow of blood. He threw his arms round the doctor's neck, and saying in a feeble voice, 'Bankhead, let me fall on your arm; I have opened my neck; it is all over,' sank on the ground, and expired."

Thus perished Lord Castlereagh, on the 12th of August, 1822, in his 54th year.

It is only of late years that aught of justice has been done to his memory. The faults and errors of his home administration, magnified by party hostility, have induced us to lose sight of his wise and judicious foreign policy his energy and vigour as a war minister, his wonderful capacity for business, his courage, coolness, and foresight. His dread of reform, his contempt for the "mobocracy," his advocacy of repressive measures, arose from the defects of his early training. Nurtured in war, bred up as a statesman in a warlike school, familiar from his entrance into political life with military details, the organization of armies, and the development of campaigns, he was ill-fitted to deal with domestic politics, and unable to comprehend the new school of reform of which Canning, Huskisson, and Russell were already the prominent leaders. But his love of practical justice and generous dealing made him an advocate of Catholic Emancipation and an enemy to the slave trade. In fine, he did good service to England, and courageously held the helm with firm and unwavering hand, when the Ship of the State was beset by perilous seas and appalling storms.

RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING.

(A.D. 1770—1827.)

"A man known in the councils of the nation,
Cool, and quite English, imperturbable,
Though apt to act with fire upon occasion."

BYRON.

GEORGE CANNING was the son of an English barrister, of good family, who had been reduced, by a succession of misfortunes, to a crisis of great pecuniary distress, in which he was involved at the time of his son's birth, April 11th, 1770, and which, exactly one year afterwards, brought him to a premature grave. Mrs. Canning was a woman of great personal attractions, and of unusual mental powers, whose courage was equal to her ill fortune. To provide for the support and education of her infant son, she determined to avail herself, on the stage, of her talents and personal qualifications, and made her debût at Drury Lane, on the 6th of November, 1773, in the character of "Jane Shore." Soon afterwards, she was, unhappily, beguiled into a marriage with an actor named Reddish, whose manners were as fascinating as his life was infamous. She had to endure the burden of a union with a man who was mad when he was not drunk, and drunk when he was not mad, until relieved by his death in 1785. By no means

dissatisfied with her sad experiences of matrimony, she was wedded a third time to a respectable silk mercer, of dramatic tastes—a Mr. Hunn, of Exeter—with whom she enjoyed some few years of happiness. It is to the credit of the hero of our brief biography that he always treated his mother with the tenderest affection. His exaltation in life never altered the current of his feelings. He addressed to her, once a week, until her death, a long letter explanatory of his views, wishes, hopes, and fears, and this sacred duty he suffered no private or public business to interrupt. When he retired, in 1801, from the office of under-secretary of state, he caused the yearly pension of £500, to which he was entitled, to be settled upon her—a noble act of self-denial, which his opponents censured with loud invective. Peter Pindar (Dr. Wolcott) eagerly joined in the abuse, representing Pitt as picking John Bull's pocket, to reward or bribe the knaves and fools whom he employed. "And Canning, too," he says—

> "And Canning, too, shall be in place,
> And get a pension for his mother."

Mrs. Canning died but five months before her gifted son, on the 27th March, 1827, at the advanced age of eighty-one.

Canning's earlier years were passed under the supervision of his uncle, Mr. Stratford Canning, a merchant and banker of respectability, and a warm Liberal politician. He introduced his nephew to Sheridan, Fox, Burke, Fitzpatrick, and other members of the Whig aristocracy, whose attention was speedily attracted by the splendid promise of his talents. From Hyde Abbey School, Winchester, where his talents as a verse-maker had already obtained re-

cognition, he was removed to Eton, between the age of twelve and thirteen, by the advice of Mr. Fox, who had been the first, with kindly heart, to acknowledge the young Canning's ability. With his classic taste already developed, with an ardent love of knowledge, and a persevering ambition, it is no wonder that at Eton the future statesman acquired immediate consideration. In its discussion or debating society his eloquence invariably won the palm; and of the "Microcosm," a periodical established by a knot of boy-authors, he was the real head, though not the ostensible editor. It ran through forty weekly numbers, of which a large portion was contributed by Canning himself, and that portion is characterized throughout by a sobriety of tone and a chasteness of expression remarkable in so juvenile a writer. The boys at Harrow started a rival weekly, whose frontispiece was adorned with an elaborate illustration, representing the two periodicals weighed in the balance, much to the disadvantage of the "Microcosm," which soars half out of sight. This arrogant print suggested to Canning an amusing epigram—

> "What mean ye by this print so rare,
> Ye wits of Harrow—jealous?
> Behold! your rivals soar in air,
> And ye are *heavy fellows!*"

At Eton, Mr. Canning was a Whig, and at Oxford, to which he removed in 1788, was a Whig and something more. But his early predilections were soon to yield to the influences of companionship, though a certain liberalism of sentiment and thought he preserved to the very close of his brilliant career.

Besides making English verses, which he wrote with much elegance and astonishing facility, Canning was

an adept at the composition of Latin hexameters, and his "Iter ad Meccam" is considered the finest Latin prize poem ever produced at Oxford. He, therefore, left the University with a high reputation for capacity and scholarship—almost the only recommendation which he bore with him into the active world. Wealth, lineage, rank, or the potent influence of aristocratic connections, he wholly lacked, and in an age when *la carrière n'était pas ouverte aux talens*, he had only his genius and his self-reliance to support him in the unequal struggle he had already resolved to undertake.

Having chosen the law as his profession, he "entered himself" at Lincoln's Inn, but not to seclude himself among dusty tomes and tawny parchments. He aimed at higher game. A burning passion for a political career devoured him. He frequented the Whig coteries, and the airiness of his wit and the ease of his address confirmed in London the fame he had already acquired in Oxford; but the fact is, that his principles were not Whiggish but Tory. He could not "assimilate" with the Whig leaders, though their flatteries were profuse and their promises exuberant; less could he favour the uprooting principles of those democrats whom the contagion of the French Revolution had aroused into life. So he suddenly proclaimed a new faith, avowed himself of a new religion, and declared his adhesion to the principles and policy of Pitt. The minister welcomed the accession of so able a supporter, and immediately brought him into Parliament, in 1793, as one of the members of the borough of Newport, Isle of Wight. At the same time, the government was reinforced by Jenkinson, and Huskisson, and Lord Castlereagh.

Canning's first speech in the House of Commons was delivered on the 31st January, 1794. It supported Mr. Pitt's motion to subsidize the King of Sardinia, and was designed as a reply to the opponents of the minister's war policy. His second, in April, defended the expeditions against Dunkirk and the evacuation of Toulon; and the third advocated the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. They sustained and justified the social reputation which Canning had already obtained, and proved to Mr. Pitt that he might implicitly rely upon the courage and fidelity of his new adherent. They also, it appears to us, offer very convincing proofs that the young politician, at the outset of his career, was not troubled by any too delicate scruples, and that consistency to the principles he had advocated at Eton, at Oxford, and in Lincoln's Inn, was not suffered to stand in the way of his political advancement. Happy for him that he lived long enough to assert his fame and vindicate his genius by supporting doctrines of a more liberal and enlightened tendency.

His first debût in office took place in 1795, as Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs—his chief, in the Peers, being the cold, haughty, but able Lord Grenville. Having necessarily vacated his seat on accepting office, he was elected M.P. for Wendover in Buckinghamshire, and appeared for the first time as a member of the government in the session of 1796. He was then but twenty-five years old, having at so early (parliamentary) an age, in spite of the obstacles of his birth, connections, and poverty, attained to a position of considerable influence and high responsibility both in Parliament and in the Administration.

Canning, however, was not content with supporting

the ministry of which he was a member only in the House of Commons, where his literary talents could find few opportunities for display, but assisted by Gifford the satirist, and the "young blood" of the Tory party, he started the famous "Anti-Jacobin," or "Weekly Examiner" (20th November, 1797), with the avowed object of confuting by ridicule, and crushing with contempt, the advocates of liberal—or, as they were then called, revolutionary — principles. Canning's contributions to this influential periodical were all of a light, graceful, and polished character. The "bludgeon work" he left to Gifford and other fit associates, while he himself dissected a vein with the keenest lancet possible. In the more scurrilous political diatribes he had but a small share, but the satires on literary men and literary topics were almost entirely his, and marked by all his finish, gracefulness, and airy wit. As a specimen of his admirable powers of satirical imitation we venture to quote the well-known parody on Southey's English Sapphics, and Southey's pseudo-philanthropy.

THE FRIEND OF HUMANITY AND THE KNIFE-GRINDER.

"Needy Knife-grinder! whither are you going?
Rough is the road, your wheel is out of order;
Bleak blows the blast;—your hat has got a hole in't,
So have your breeches!

"Weary Knife-grinder! little think the proud ones,
Who in their coaches roll along the turnpike-
Road, what hard work 'tis crying all day, 'Knives and
Scissors to grind O!'

"Tell me, Knife-grinder, how came you to grind knives?
Did some rich man tyranically use you?
Was it the squire; or parson of the parish;
Or the attorney?

"Was it the squire, for killing of his game? or
Covetous parson, for his tithes distraining?
Or roguish lawyer made you lose your little
All in a lawsuit?

"(Have you not read the 'Rights of Man,' by Tom Paine?)
Drops of compassion tremble on my eyelids
Ready to fall as soon as you have told your
Pitiful story."

KNIFE-GRINDER.

"Story, God bless you! I have none to tell, sir
Only last night a-drinking at the 'Chequers,'
This poor old hat and breeches, as you see, were
Torn in a scuffle.

"Constables came up for to take me into
Custody; they took me before the justice!
Justice Oldmixon put me in the parish
Stocks for a vagrant.

"I should be glad to drink your Honour's health in
A pot of beer, if you will give me sixpence;
But for my part I never love to meddle
With politics, sir."

FRIEND OF HUMANITY.

"*I* give thee sixpence! I will see thee hanged first.
Wretch! whom no sense of wrongs can rouse to vengeance;
Sordid, unfeeling, reprobate, degraded,
Spiritless outcast!"

[*Kicks the Knife-grinder, overturns his wheel, and exit in a transport of republican enthusiasm and universal philanthropy.*]

The full extent of Canning's powers, however, was not as yet understood by his warmest admirers. He had hitherto exhibited the lighter faculties of his comprehensive mind; had turned to the world, as it were, the sunny side of his penetrating intellect. But from 1798 he displayed not only the dexterity and tact of the partizan, but the force, depth, and gravity of the statesman. Success had produced that essential qualification of a great man—self reliance. He *felt* his powers, and he was determined the world should feel them.

The first great speech made by George Canning—the first of those wonderful orations which have filled all England with his fame—was spoken on the 11th of December, 1798, in opposition to Mr. Tierney's motion, recommending peace with France. It was a noble effort. With surprising skill Canning stripped bare all Tierney's arguments, and, by exposing their weak points, induced his audience to forget what strength there was in others. The real difficulties of "the situation" he painted with extraordinary force, and the tyranny exercised by the French Republic over half the Continent he illustrated to his hearers with a concentrated energy of expression which took captive the coldest listener. Mr. Tierney had ridiculed the ministerial phrase, "the deliverance of Europe." What did the government mean by it? From what was Europe to be delivered? Canning's reply was masterly. "I cannot undertake," he said, "to answer for other gentlemen's powers of comprehension. The map of Europe is before them. I can only say that I do not admire that man's intellects, and I do not envy that man's feelings, who can look over that map without gathering some notion of what is

meant by 'the deliverance of Europe.' I do not envy that man's feelings, who can behold the sufferings of Switzerland, and who derives from that sight no idea of what is meant by the 'deliverance of Europe.' I do not envy the feelings of that man who can look without emotion at Italy, plundered, insulted, trampled upon, exhausted, covered with ridicule, and horror, and devastation; who can look at all this, and be at a loss to guess what is meant by the 'deliverance of Europe?' As little do I envy the feelings of that man who can view the people of the Netherlands driven into insurrection and struggling for their freedom against the heavy hand of a merciless tyranny, without entertaining any suspicion of what may be the sense of the word 'deliverance.' Does such a man contemplate Holland groaning under arbitrary oppressions and exactions?—Does he turn his eyes to Spain trembling at the nod of a foreign master?—and does the word 'deliverance' still sound unintelligibly in his ears? Has he heard of the rescue and salvation of Naples by the appearance and the triumphs of the British fleet? Does he know that the monarchy of Naples maintains its existence at the sword's point? and is his understanding, is his heart still impenetrable to the sense and meaning of the 'deliverance of Europe?'"

The next great questions on which he exerted all his powers were, the proposed emancipation of the slaves, and the legislative union of Ireland with Great Britain. That he exerted himself in favour of both of these great measures might be expected from Pitt's favourite adherent and disciple. The latter was indissolubly linked, as far as Pitt and the government were concerned, with the relief of the Roman Catholics from

their cruel civil disabilities, and though in itself successful, was destined to overthrow the ministry. If the union with Ireland was necessary for the safety of the empire, it was equally necessary for the safety of Ireland that Roman Catholic emancipation should accompany it. Pitt, Canning, Castlereagh, three widely different men in abilities, characters, and prejudices, all felt that justice required them to concede this emancipation. But they met with opposition in a quarter where, assuredly, Pitt had not expected it, and in a quarter where he was bound to regard opposition with respect. "Mr. Pitt," says Lord Malmesbury, "either from indolence or from perhaps not paying always a sufficient and due attention to the king's pleasure, neglected to mention, ministerially, to his Majesty that such a measure was in agitation, till he came at once with it for his approbation." * Then he found the king immoveable in his repugnance to all concessions to the Catholics. Pitt plied him with arguments; the king retorted with his coronation oath. At length Pitt resigned, and was followed into his retirement by Canning and Canning's friend Huskisson.

A few months previous to his resignation, Canning had married. His wife, Joan, was one of the daughters and co-heiresses of General Scott, and sister to the Duchess of Portland. Canning received with her a large fortune, which relieved him from all pecuniary anxieties, while her grace of manner and unchanging tenderness shed the pure and holy light of married happiness upon his domestic hearth.

During the interregnum which now ensued, Canning, in spite of Pitt himself, was active in preparing the way

* Lord Malmesbury's "Diaries," vol. iv.

for Pitt's return to power. Addington, who was now premier, Canning both disliked and despised, and during the year 1803, he assailed his feeble administration with powerful hostility. He nicknamed him "the Doctor," in allusion to the circumstance which had originated his father's fortunes. That father was a country practitioner, whose fortune it was to be called in to attend the Earl of Chatham's coachman, and the earl's regular attendant being absent, he so far acquired the confidence of the family as to obtain the appointment of resident physician. At a later period, recommended by Chatham to George III., he became that monarch's confidential adviser, and his influence in the royal closet was unbounded. In England nicknames are singularly adhesive, and "the Doctor" became the theme of many a racy jest. On one occasion, when Addington had been unexpectedly opposed by the Scotch members, Sheridan leant across the table in the House of Commons, and amidst the general laughter, exclaimed, "Doctor, the thanes fly from thee!" A witty pasquinade in verse began—

> "If the health and strength, and the pure vital breath,
> Of old England, at last, must be doctored to death,
> Oh! why must we die of one doctor alone?
> And why must that doctor be just such an one
> As Doctor Henry Addington?"

Over the details of the agitation kept up against "the Doctor" we must not linger. At first, it was conducted in direct opposition to the wishes of Pitt, who was pleasing himself with the idea that he had closed his ears against the whispers of ambition, and no longer cared for the power which he had once preserved so jealously. "My plans," wrote the lofty statesman, "have not the concurrence of my eager and ardent

young friends, but we are on the best of terms, and it is much more easy for me to forgive their impetuosity, than for them to be in charity with me for treating office with so little regard, and keeping it at such a distance from those who are disposed to act with me."

Meanwhile, Addington, though his government only existed by the sufferance of Pitt, had begun to think that his stability in office was due to his own merits, and aware that he possessed the king's confidence, daily assumed an access of dignity. Sheridan, indeed, had plainly told him the general feeling of the House and the country in his admirable adaptation of Martial's "Non amo te, Sabidi":—

> "I do not like thee, Doctor Fell,
> The reason why, I cannot tell;
> But this I know, and know full well,
> I do *not* like thee, Doctor Fell."

Many of his own colleagues had charged him with his incapacity. But Addington remained unmoved. He held the seals of office, and he had the entrée of the king's private closet.

At length the end came. Suddenly, like a house built upon sand, the Addington administration tumbled to pieces, and there was no one to honour its melancholy fate with even the simplest memorial. The king sent for Pitt (7th May, 1804), and Pitt consented to resume power if permitted to form a government which should include the best men of the nation, in order to face with suitable dignity that nation's imminent perils. The difficulties which beset the great minister's efforts, the resistance made by the narrow-minded king to the introduction of Fox into the

cabinet, the final failure of Pitt's exertions to unite parties on a comprehensive basis, and his restriction in the formation of his government to a few of his own adherents, and the *matériel* of the Addington ministry; on these points we have already dilated in our sketch of the career of Pitt. Nor need we expatiate here upon the ill-fortune of Pitt's second administration, in which Canning took office as Treasurer of the Navy, or the heavy blow its reputation received in the conviction of Lord Melville. As germane to our immediate subject we may, however, be permitted to quote the impromptu parody written by Canning on the speech in which Lord Melville's impeachment was moved by Mr. Whitbread, the opulent brewer. It amusingly characterizes his personal vanity, as well as the want of sequence which marked his orations in the House.

"FRAGMENT OF AN ORATION.

"*Part of Mr. Whitbread's Speech on the Trial of Lord Melville, put into verse by Mr. Canning at the time it was delivered.*

"I'm like Archimedes for science and skill;
I'm like a young prince going straight up a hill;
If you ask why the 11th of June I remember,
Much better than April, or May, or November.
On that day, my lords, with truth I assure ye,
My sainted progenitor set up his brewery;
On that day, in the morn, he began brewing beer;
On that day, too, commenced his connubial career;
On that day he received and he issued his bills;
On that day he cleared out all the cash from his tills;
On that day he died, having finished his summing,
And the angels all cried, 'Here's old Whitbread a-coming!'

So that day still I hail with a smile and a sigh,
For his beer with an E, and his bier with an I;
And still on that day, in the hottest of weather,
The whole Whitbread family dine altogether.
So long as the beams of this house shall support
The roof which o'ershades this respectable court,
Where Hastings was tried for oppressing the Hindoos—
So long as that sun shall shine in at those windows,
My name shall shine bright as my ancestor's shines,
Mine recorded in journals, *his* blazoned on signs!"

Pitt died of old age—the old age of the heart and the brain—early in 1806. He was honoured with a public funeral, and a memorial in Westminster Abbey. The Latin inscription, an elegant eulogy, was penned by Canning, his devoted adherent, his favourite disciple, who, six years later, had the courage and fidelity to say, "To one man, while he lived, I was devoted with all my heart and all my soul. Since the death of Mr. Pitt, I acknowledge no leader; my political allegiance is buried in his grave."

To the new administration of which Lord Grenville was the head, and Fox the Foreign Secretary, Canning speedily declared an uncompromising opposition, attacking, we regret to say, many measures of liberal tendency, and displaying a spirit which was more Pittish than Pitt himself. Parliament was then divided into two great parties, the Foxites and the Pittites, between whom existed a bitterness of animosity such as nowadays our politicians would be ashamed or afraid to display. The premature death of Fox in September 1806 broke up these two hostile camps, and the "All the Talents" administration, of which that great man had been the informing spirit, fell to pieces in March 1807. Its

measures had been characterized by great ability, and a liberal desire to meet the necessities of the age; but personal feeling was involved in the opposition that met it at every step, and it sank before the incessant attacks of its opponents, and the ill-disguised dislike of the king. Canning, whose malignant antagonism cannot but be regretted as lowering his character as a statesman and even as a patriot, celebrated its fall in a bitter but clever epitaph:—

"ALL THE TALENTS.

"When the broad-bottom'd junta,* with reason at strife,
Resign'd, with a sigh, its political life;
When converted to Rome,† and of honesty tired,
They gave back to the devil the soul he inspired;

"The demon of faction that over them hung,
In accents of horror their epitaph sung;
While Pride and Venality join'd in the stave,
And canting Democracy wept at the grave.

"Here lies in the tomb that was hollow'd for Pitt,
The consistence of Grenville,‡ of Temple§ the wit;
Of Sidmouth‖ the firmness, the temper of Grey,¶
And Treasurer Sheridan's promise to pay.**

* The administration was nicknamed "All the Talents," and the "broad-bottom'd," because it professed to include some of the ablest men of both parties.

† Alluding to its reasonable concessions to the Roman Catholics.

‡ Lord Grenville, the Premier.

§ Earl Temple, Secretary of State, Pitt's cousin.

‖ Lord Sidmouth, the new title of "Doctor" Addington.

¶ Lord Howick, Foreign Secretary, afterwards the famous Earl Grey, of the Reform Bill.

** Alluding to Richard Brinsley Sheridan's lax morality in money matters.

"Here Petty's* finance, from the evils to come,
With Fitzpatrick's† sobriety creeps to the tomb;
And Chancellor Ego‡, now left in the lurch,
Neither dines with the Jordan§, nor whines for the church.

"Then huzza for the party that here is at rest,
By the fools of a fashion regretted and blest;
Though they sleep with the devil, yet theirs is the hope,
On the downfall of Britain to rise with the Pope."

A new government was formed on the failure of "All the Talents" by that highly respectable nobleman, the Duke of Portland, in which, as the duke was given to opium and lethargy, Mr. Perceval was the guiding spirit. He was the Chancellor of the Exchequer: a man of ordinary talent, but good business habits, and bigoted enough in his opposition to any relief of the Roman Catholics from their civil disabilities, to please even mutton-loving George III. himself. Associated with him were, Lord Castlereagh as Secretary at War, Lord Hawkesbury, "a man without a head," as Home Secretary, and Canning as Foreign Secretary. The real bias of Canning's mind may surely be detected from his consenting to ally himself with a ministry that was necessarily pledged to restrictive and illiberal measures. In the "All the Talents" administration, which he had attacked with so much force and such envenomed hostility, there was never so vast a diversity of opinion as in this government, fathered by the Duke of Portland, but begotten by Perceval.

* Lord Henry Petty, Chancellor of the Exchequer, now Marquis of Lansdowne. † General Fitzpatrick.

‡ Lord Erskine, whose egotism was considerable.

§ Mrs. Jordan.

At first, the new ministry seemed launched on a summer sea. They dissolved the Parliament which had dealt with their predecessors, and called a new one, which gave them a majority of 195 votes. The king was strenuous in their support, and the nation, if not too eager to welcome them, was at least disposed to give them a fair trial. Nor was Canning's administration of the Foreign Office calculated to bring them into contempt. Like all truly great men, he rose to the exigencies of his position, and displayed in his new sphere a tact, a diplomatic ability, and a breadth of view of which but few of his friends had believed him possessed.

When Napoleon endeavoured to form a confederacy of the naval powers of Europe against England, Canning and Castlereagh decided upon the bold and successful stroke which resulted in the capture of the whole Danish navy at Copenhagen. He also took, at once, a decided position with respect to the French invasion of Spain and Portugal, and authorized the military expedition which was the beginning of the Peninsular war, and the first effectual stand against the supremacy of Napoleon on the Continent.

It was not long, however, before a bitter animosity sprang up between Canning and his colleague, Lord Castlereagh. The quick, enthusiastic, sparkling commoner was not, indeed, a fitting yokemate for the calm, polished, and immoveable peer. After a succession of disputes their hostilities came to a crisis at the epoch of the celebrated Walcheren expedition, and Canning insisted upon Lord Castlereagh's removal. This circumstance, however, was not made known to Castlereagh, and he continued his energetic labours in the

War Office in complete ignorance that his designs were censured and his position menaced by his potent and sarcastic colleague. When at length the Walcheren expedition failed, not as we conceive from any want of judgment on the part of Lord Castlereagh, he found that Canning had, from the first, denounced it as an ill-judged enterprise. Their recriminations resulted in a duel on Putney Heath on the 21st of September, Lord Castlereagh being attended by Lord Yarmouth, and Mr. Canning by Mr. Charles Ellis. An attempt was made to effect a reconciliation after the first fire, in which neither had been injured, but it failed. The principals again fired, and Mr. Canning was wounded in the thigh by a shot from Lord Castlereagh. The wound was slight, and on the 11th of October Canning waited upon the king, and resigned the seals of the Foreign Office. He was followed into his retirement by his disinterested friend, Mr. Huskisson, and shortly afterwards the Duke of Portland, enfeebled by disease, and stricken down by his disasters, yielded the premiership into the hands of the sagacious Mr. Perceval.

Canning at this time resided at Gloucester Lodge, so-named from the Duchess of Gloucester, by whom it had been erected, and who had died there in 1807. It was pleasantly situated in a well-wooded and sequestered spot, from whence the great statesman might look out afar with curious interest upon the world's storm-tost sea. Here, in a circle composed of men distinguished by their wit, humour, or political experience, he enjoyed a happy and dignified leisure. He was partial to "fireside games," and it was not unusual to see him and his friends, English councillors and foreign diplomatists,

engaged in the mysteries of some such abstruse pastime as "Twenty Questions." Canning, moreover, was a scholar, well acquainted with the literature of his own country, as well as with the classics of Greece and Rome; and his patronage of men of letters was generous and unremitting.

During the sessions of 1810 and 1811 Canning's speeches in Parliament were few. In the latter year, indeed, he distinguished himself by a remarkably luminous speech upon a by no means luminous subject, the currency—"a speech which for beauty of illustration, mastery of principles and details, and sound reasoning, has never been surpassed at any period in any language." Equally admirable was the oration he delivered on the 3rd of February, 1812, in favour of the emancipation of the Roman Catholics from their civil disabilities. It was universally felt that ere long the orator must return to power, and on Mr. Perceval's assassination by Bellingham, in 1812, when the amiable and respectable Earl of Liverpool was charged with the formation of a ministry, he made repeated efforts to obtain his services. His offers were, however, refused by Canning, from jealousy of Lord Castlereagh, and yet, in a few months, he accepted the embassy to Lisbon at the hands of that nobleman, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. This is a passage in Mr. Canning's career which it is difficult to explain, and impossible to justify. Must we conclude that Canning had originally believed it impossible for an adminstration to be formed which did not include *himself*, and upon his own terms? And that when he found himself mistaken on this point he accepted a foreign mission rather than be altogether shut out of power and office? On the other hand it is

reasonable to suppose that the ministry were by no means unwilling to remove so formidable an opponent as Mr. Canning to a sphere of action where he could exercise no adverse influence.

Mr. Canning remained at Lisbon about a year and a half. On his return a vacancy having occurred in the Presidency of the Board of Control by the death of the Earl of Buckinghamshire, he was appointed to the office on the special invitation of the Prince Regent. In this capacity he distinguished himself by his eloquent justificatory speeches in defence of the restrictive and arbitrary measures adopted by the government. It was pitiful, however, to see the genius and eloquence of George Canning employed to defend or apologize for a series of unconstitutional acts. "It is impossible," says one of his most friendly biographers, "to look back upon his conduct during those years of strife and misery without a feeling of profound regret. It was deplorable enough, after all that had transpired of personal contempt and distrust towards the Castlereaghs and Sidmouths in former days, to find him associated with them in the cabinet; but worse, still worse, to find him making himself extravagantly prominent in the justification of their misdeeds." His biographer then attempts an apology which seems to us eminently unsatisfactory. "Perhaps," he says, "his excessive zeal on behalf of his colleagues, may be ascribed to the nervous uneasiness of the relation in which he stood to them. Keenly alive to the unpopularity of his position, rendered conspicuous above all the rest by the splendour of his aims, it seems as if this very consciousness only made him the more anxious to assume a confidence in the proceedings of the government which his judgment must have secretly

disowned. To this mental warfare must be attributed the unusual bitterness he manifested towards his opponents throughout the time he held the office of President of Council. He never showed so much excitement or impatience before. The slightest contradiction called him up, and all questions, from the spirit in which they were treated, became more or less personal before they were finally disposed of. He was ill at ease with himself, and dissatisfied with the distorting circumstances by which he was surrounded."

In January, 1820, died George III. This public grief was followed in March of the same year by a private sorrow—the death of Canning's eldest son, George Charles, at the early age of nineteen.

To the history of England rather than to the life of Canning belong the dark, sad episode of the misfortunes and follies of Caroline of Brunswick, whose miserable lot it was to be wedded to George IV., King of England—to the meanest of debauchees and the coarsest of luxurious profligates. Canning was, from the first, her kind and judicious adviser, and though he often visited with severe but deserved censure her acts of imprudence, she entertained for him a warm and admiring regard. In the shameful proceedings adopted against the sinning but ill-treated woman he took no share. "So help me God!" he emphatically exclaimed, "I will never place myself in the situation of an accuser towards that individual." And when he found himself unable to escape from the responsibility which attended the ministerial measures, and necessarily compromised each member of the cabinet, he resigned office, though his resignation was adverse to the wishes of the king.

His retirement from the Board of Control (December

1820) was much regretted by the East India Directors, and before two years had elapsed they significantly marked their admiration of his capacity by offering him the gorgeous appointment of Governor-General of India, an office of high distinction and great power, which it was not, however, his lot to fill, but which his son, the present Earl Canning, has occupied, for several perilous years, with an ability and a credit not unworthy of his brilliant sire. Mr. Canning had, indeed, accepted the splendid appointment with its magnificent income; but it happened at this crisis, that Lord Castlereagh (Marquis of Londonderry), in an access of nervous despondency, committed suicide (August 1822), and Lord Liverpool besought him to accept the vacant office—the Secretaryship of Foreign Affairs—and lend his support to a tottering ministry. His love of political influence at home was greater than his desire for almost regal power abroad. He accepted the prime minister's offer, and was strengthened in his new position by the appointment of his close friend and adherent, Huskisson, as President of the Board of Trade.

It has often been the fashion to represent Canning and Castlereagh as pursuing widely different principles in their respective administration of the Foreign Office. This is not the case. Both had the same object in view—the reconstruction of the European system in such a manner as to counteract the preponderance of France. Both protested, but in vain, against the unprincipled partition of Poland; but both consented to the cession of Venice to Austria, because to strengthen Austria was to weaken France. The instructions issued by Canning to the Duke of Wellington, who represented England at the Congress of Verona, were

When Canning said, "I looked to Spain in the Indies, I called a *new* world into existence to redress the balance of the old," the effect was actually terrific.—p. 249.

such as Castlereagh himself would have approved, and Castlereagh and Canning were equally earnest in withdrawing Great Britain from all complicity in the so-called "Holy Alliance."

The most signal action of Canning as Foreign Minister was the prompt recognition of the independence of the Spanish colonies in America, which he somewhat magniloquently described as calling "the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old." He did not succeed in carrying this recognition without severe opposition from several of his colleagues, and was twice compelled to proffer his resignation. With equal energy he interfered to protect the independence of Portugal, then menaced by perfidious Spain. His own language, as addressed to the House of Commons, may here be quoted:—"The precise information," he said, "on which alone we could act, arrived only on Friday last (December 8, 1826). On Saturday the decision of the Government was taken; on Sunday we obtained the sanction of his Majesty; on Monday we came down to Parliament; and at this very hour, while I have now the honour of addressing this House, British troops are on their way to Portugal!"

Some interesting particulars of the debate on this memorable occasion are preserved in the "Diary of an M.P.," written by one of Canning's contemporaries:—"When," observes the M.P., "in the style and manner of Chatham, he said, 'I looked to Spain in the Indies, I called a *new* world into existence to redress the balance of the old,' the effect was actually terrific. It was as if every man in the House had been electrified. Tierney, who before that was shifting in his seat, and taking off his hat and putting it on again, and taking large and

frequent pinches of snuff, and turning from side to side, till he, I suppose, wore his breeches through, seemed petrified, and sat fixed and staring with his mouth open for half a minute! Mr. Canning seemed actually to have increased in stature, his attitude was so majestic. I remarked his flourishes were made with his left arm—the effect was new and beautiful; his chest heaved and expanded, his nostril dilated, a noble pride slightly curled his lip; and age and sickness were dissolved and forgotten in the ardour of youthful genius; all the while a serenity sat on his brow, that pointed to deeds of glory."

But if the great orator was thus liberal in his ideas of foreign policy he was by no means inclined to advocate measures of reform at home, however urgent their need or unexceptionable their character. Talk of "the liberalism" of George Canning! Why, he strenuously opposed the smallest modicum of Parliamentary reform, and devoutly resisted the repeal of the Test Act. It is true that he advocated Roman Catholic emancipation, but not so much on account of its justice as of its policy. It was necessary as an administrative measure. Ireland could not have been governed without it; but England, as far as Canning knew, might be kept in order, though deprived of Parliamentary reform. In his advocacy of the relief of the Catholics he was, however, nobly consistent to the last.

Before directing our attention to the closing scenes of Canning's life we may incidentally mention, that, in 1824, he was enthusiastically received at Dublin on a visit in connection with the projected marriage of his only daughter to the Marquis of Clanricade. This marriage took place in 1825. In the following year he

visited France, and was received by Charles X. and his court with the most flattering distinction. In January 1827, as Foreign Minister, he attended the funeral of the Duke of York, and there, it is supposed, caught a cold which sowed in his already enfeebled frame the seeds of a mortal disease.

It was in February 1827, that Lord Liverpool, whose respectability of character and decorousness of manner, had kept together, for fifteen years, a cabinet formed of the most heterogeneous materials, was stricken with apoplexy, and it was soon discovered that no hopes could be entertained of his eventual recovery. An attempt was immedately made by the ultra Tories to keep Canning out of the high office to which his genius and services entitled him—the Premiership of England—and it was desired to place at the head of the administration a peer opposed to the settlement of the Roman Catholic claims. But Canning was resolved not to surrender the laurel which he had fairly won. Except as leader of the adminstration he would not take office, and it was futile to attempt the construction of a government without him. He was eminently popular with the nation ; his influence in the Commons was all powerful. Even the king, though as bigoted as his father in his ideas of Protestant ascendency, was shocked by the unscrupulousness of the coalition formed against the minister, and decided in his favour. Canning, therefore, early in April 1827, kissed hands as First Lord of the Treasury, and the parvenu—the low-born son of a wine merchant and an actress—found himself the first subject in England, and the virtual ruler of an empire on which "the sun never sets". To this illustrious position he had won his way by the

exercise of his own genius. He had literally risen from the ranks, unaided by the potent influence of wealth or aristocratic connections. And now he stood before all Europe the foremost man in England.

But the position he had gained he was not fated to enjoy. Scarcely had he accepted office but his difficulties commenced. He looked round him for colleagues. He applied to the men with whom he had been associated under Lord Liverpool; to Wellington, Eldon, Peel, Bathurst, Melville. All, on various pretexts, declined to serve under their former comrade, and many evinced a personal hostility of the most disreputable character. From the anti-Catholic party it was evident that he must expect no quarter. His enemies doubtlessly flattered themselves that disheartened by so many repulses he would relinquish the task he had presumptuously undertaken. Canning was made of no such yielding stuff. He now applied himself to the formation of a government on a more liberal basis; and before the end of April found himself supported by the Duke of Clarence (William IV.) as First Lord of the Admiralty; the Marquis of Anglesea as Master of the Ordnance; Lord Lyndhurst, whose eloquence still, after a lapse of five and thirty years, adorns the imperial senate, as Lord Chancellor; Mr. Huskisson, Lord Dudley, Lord Goderich, and others. The last appointment, a most admirable one, was that of Lord William Bentinck to the Governor-generalship of India.

The assault which was immediately made upon the new administration is now regarded by critics of both parties as one of the most pitiable episodes in our parliamentary history. The chief violence of the attack necessarily fell upon Mr. Canning, whom the sleuth

hounds of faction pursued to the death with an unparalleled malignity. The hatred against him was personal, individual; it was Canning, not Canning's measures that they reviled, abused, and calumniated. He found his only friends and his staunchest supporters amongst the Whigs—that is in the party to which he had been for years politically opposed. And it may here be noted, that every day Mr. Canning was himself approximating closer and closer to a Whig policy, and it is probable that had his life been prolonged, his errors as an ultra-Tory partizan would have been redeemed by his wise action as a liberal Conservative minister. The struggle, however, in which he was engaged proved too much for his diseased frame and sensitive constitution. He was already dying, though neither he nor his friends suspected it. During the session, indeed, his energies were maintained by the excitement of battle; but Parliament was prorogued on the 2nd of July, and the bow which had been strung so tensely immediately relaxed.

The mournful particulars of his last days we shall give in the words of Canning's most genial biographer (Mr. Robert Bell):—

"On the 10th of July," he says, "Mr. Canning dined with the Chancellor (Lyndhurst) at Wimbledon, and incautiously sitting under a tree in the open air, while he was yet warm with exercise, caught a cold which ended in rheumatism. Mr. Huskisson, whose health was also suffering, and who had been recommended to try the air of the Continent, called on Mr. Canning to take leave, and found him in bed, looking very ill. Struck by the change in his looks, he observed that he, Mr. Canning, was the person who most

stood in need of change and relaxation. Mr. Canning smiled and replied cheerfully, 'Oh, it is only the reflection of the yellow linings of the curtains.' He never saw him again—that faithful life-long friend.

"On the 20th, Mr. Canning removed to the Duke of Devonshire's villa at Chiswick, which his grace had lent to him for change of air; the same villa and the same room to which Fox, under circumstances painfully similar, and at the same age, had also removed—to die.

"His disease—still increasing—fluctuated from day to day, and he was occasionally able to attend to public business. On the 25th he dined with the Marquis of Clanricarde, but complained of debility, and returned early to Chiswick. On the 30th he paid his last visit to the king at Windsor; his majesty saw that he was very ill, and desired Sir William Knighton to call upon him. It was too late. Mr. Canning received some friends at dinner on the following day, retired early, and never rose again. He suffered excruciating pain, which rent his frame so violently, as to deprive him at intervals of all mental consciousness. On the Sunday before his death, he requested his daughter to read prayers; his own unvarying custom, whenever he was prevented from attending church. At length his strength fell, his agonies diminished in proportion, and on the 8th of August, 1827, a little before four o'clock in the morning, he expired, in the 57th year of his age."

A splendid funeral, a grave in Westminster Abbey near that of his old political leader, Pitt, a peerage to his widow, medals, statues, monuments, such were the marks of public gratitude and admiration bestowed

on the dead statesman. And his memory is still green amongst us as that of a brilliant orator and an able minister, who held the helm of the state with unquailing courage, and in the darkest hours never despaired of the commonwealth.

SIR ROBERT PEEL.

(A.D. 1788—1850.)

Sir Robert Peel was the second baronet of that name. His father, a wealthy cotton-spinner of Bury, and a man of broad and comprehensive views, received a baronetcy at the hands of William Pitt, in 1800. The second Sir Robert was born on the 5th of July, 1788, twelve years before this high distinction was obtained, and two years before his father's entrance into Parliament as member for a borough which his enterprise had almost re-created —the borough of Tamworth. His mother was a Miss Yates, the daughter of Mr. Peel's partner in the cotton-spinning firm, who became the wife of the senior and the chief on the 8th of July, 1783. Two daughters had already sprung from this felicitous union.

During his boyhood, the second Sir Robert Peel displayed none of those wonderfully brilliant qualities which, by superficial persons, are considered inseparable from the early years of great men; but he was found to be possessed of a clearness of judgment, and a solidity of application, which encouraged his father to prepare him for a public career. After receiving a particular course of education at home, he was sent, in 1801, to Harrow School, where he was the contemporary of the future author of "Childe Harold." The illustrious poet, at a later period, spoke warmly of his quondam

schoolfellow:—"There was always," he says, "great hopes of Peel amongst us all, masters and scholars, and he has not disappointed them. As a scholar he was greatly my superior; as a declaimer and actor, I was reckoned at least his equal." This distinction clearly illustrates the particular bias of Peel's talents; he neither glittered nor shone, but he worked assiduously and sagaciously. So, too, when removed to Christchurch, Oxford, he showed an extraordinary aptitude for study, and acquired high honours for his attainments in mathematics and classics. His love of the literature of Greece and Rome did not desert him to his latest life, and his speeches in the house of Commons were often illustrated by a felicitous quotation from Virgil or Horace. But neither at Harrow nor Christchurch did the youthful Peel exhibit any brilliancy of wit, or breadth of humour, or fertility of fancy, nor those dazzling but specious qualities by which inferior men have often risen to the topmost round of Ambition's giddy ladder. He was endowed, however, with one important faculty —a clear and almost intuitive perception of the weaknesses of other men.

In the course of 1808 he completed his studies at Oxford, and in the following year, having attained his majority, was returned for the snug little borough of Cashel. Thus, at the early age of twenty-one, with the prestige of University distinction, and the influence of his father's wealth to support him on his first introduction to political life, Peel commenced his remarkable career. The administration was then in the hands of Mr. Spencer Perceval, a "second-rate lawyer" and a fifth-rate statesman, whose chief support was to be found in the fertile brain and dazzling eloquence of George Can-

ning, and the indefatigable appetite for work of Lord Castlereagh. Arrayed against the ministerialists, who were more formidable by numbers than by political ability, stood Sheridan and Tierney, Horner and Whitbread, Romilly, Sir Francis Burdett, and Charles Grant (afterwards Lord Glenelg). It was against these heroes of debate that Peel had to measure himself, and, with characteristic caution, he carefully felt his way before he entered upon a contest in which defeat would have been ruin to his father's proud hopes and his own secret aspirations.

It was not until the 23rd of January, 1810, that Peel made his *début* in the Commons as a speaker. The occasion was one of no great import, for it is the custom of governments to place the moving and seconding of the address, with which each Parliamentary session opens, in the hands of the "sucking orators" of their party, who are thus allowed, with comparative impunity, to roar as 'twere so many nightingales, for one night only. In his first attempt Peel succeeded to the satisfaction of his friends; in his second he commanded the respectful attention of his opponents. This second effort was made on a more important occasion. The disastrous failure of the Walcheren expedition had been charged upon the administration, and a motion of censure was brought forward by Lord Porchester. Mr. Peel defended the ministry in a speech which may fairly be said to have secured him at once a Parliamentary reputation. It was seen that he commanded those qualities in which our British senate most delights—nerve, self-possession, coolness, an easy, logical array of arguments, an elegant fluency, a happy disposition of facts, and a total absence of rhetorical pretension. With few excep-

tions, our Parliaments have never admired, nor been influenced by great orators. "The House" cares but little for a Demosthenes or a Cicero; it listens with respectful attention to a ready debater. Burke was always "too deep for his hearers," and Macaulay's finest orations never carried off a vote.

Peel continued to address the House with success, and the ministry speedily became aware of the importance of strengthening its ranks by the accession of an adherent of such evident capacity. "The mercantile interest of Sir Robert Peel was extensive; and the premier, already aware of the steadiness of character and practical talent possessed by his son, found in the younger Peel that which he wanted, a steady and diligent subaltern, connected by birth and fortune with the manufacturing class." Peel, therefore, found himself, in 1811—that is to say, in his twenty-fourth year—already the occupant of an official position of repute as Under Secretary for the Colonies.

It was not long before he was raised to a higher office. The murder of Mr. Perceval on the 11th of May, 1812, necessarily overthrew the government of which he had been the head, and a new anti-Catholic administration was formed by Lord Liverpool, who offered the difficult position of Chief Secretary of Ireland to Peel; and it may here be noted, as a curious historical fact, that, in the same administration, the post of Secretary at War was held by our present premier, Lord Palmerston.

The state of Ireland at this period was one of alarming inquietude, and duties of the most onerous nature devolved upon its chief secretary. That man of great genius and enthusiastic confidence, half demagogue,

half patriot, not without something of the heroic in his quick, impassioned nature, but degraded by much that was coarse and mean, Daniel O'Connell, the most eloquent and sagacious of popular agitators, was at this time in the flush of his powers, and exercising a wonderful influence upon the priesthood and people of Ireland. He was a very different, but far more dangerous foe to contend with, than the Emmetts and Wolfe Tones, or the Grattans and Floods of the early days of Irish discontent. An admirable lawyer, he confined, for years, his agitation within legal limits. A sincere Catholic, he was wholly trusted by the Roman Catholic clergy. An orator of unusual excellence, he could sway the passions of the multitude, or stir up the feelings of the senate. Such was the character of the principal opponent with whom Mr. Peel, as chief secretary, was called upon to contend, and whom, after a lapse of years, he, as Prime Minister, signally defeated.

The chief secretary, it must be confessed, was not recommended to the Roman Catholics by his antecedents. He was an opponent of their proposed relief from those penal laws, which had so cruelly fettered them for centuries. So great was believed to be his devotion to the principle of Protestant ascendancy, and his attachment to the "Orange," or anti-Catholic party, that he was reviled in every Irish cabin as the rabid "Orange Peel." This, however, was the exaggeration of hatred; for it may reasonably be doubted whether the chief secretary had not, even at this early period, foreseen the possible necessity of conceding, before many years had elapsed, the claims so pertinaciously urged by the Irish Catholics. His mind was of a peculiar cast; promptitude of decision was not its characteristic. He

loved to hesitate, to doubt, to linger over a subject, to calculate probabilities, and, it may almost be said, that he never accepted a policy without admitting to himself that a future reversal of that policy would possibly be necessary and useful. If Peel's character, therefore, had been comprehended by his Celtic opponents, it may be doubted whether they would have lavished upon him so uncompromising an hostility. His practical genius, meanwhile, projected and carried out many measures of real improvement, and especially aimed at the foundation of secular schools, which he regarded as a species of neutral ground, where both Catholics and Protestants might meet in peace. Education, indeed, was his great panacea for all the diseases, real or pretended, with which Ireland was afflicted.

We may pass over the debates on the state of that unhappy country, which occupied a portion of each succeeding session, with little other result than to display the dexterity, fluency, and versatility of the chief secretary; but we cannot avoid allusion to the famous "passage of arms" between Peel and O'Connell, in 1815. The Catholic Emancipation party had received a severe defeat in the House of Commons. In the course of the debate, the chief secretary had censured the great Agitator's conduct with eloquent severity. O'Connell took an early opportunity to retaliate. In a public meeting, he spoke as follows:—"I said at the last meeting, in the presence of the note-takers of the police who are paid by him, that he was too prudent to attack me in my presence. I see the same police-informers here now, and I authorize them carefully to report my words, that Mister Peel would not *dare*, in my presence, nor in any place where he was liable to

personal account, to use a single expression derogatory of my intellect or my honour!"

The absurd and criminal practice of "duelling" was much in vogue in 1815, and any two gentlemen whom a hot word had plunged into "difficulties," invariably attempted to settle them with a bullet or two. Peel's good sense must have shown him the folly of yielding to a custom as reprehensible as it was ridiculous, but he thought it advisable to conform to Irish notions, and employed his friend, Sir Charles Saxton, to communicate with O'Connell in reference to his offensive observations. The Irish Agitator's "friend" was a Mr. Lidwill. From some unexplained circumstances, the "friends" could not decide whether Peel or O'Connell should send the preliminary challenge. Their differences speedily merged into a quarrel, and their quarrel could only be settled by a duel. Meanwhile, the matter had become public, and O'Connell, on his way to the Continent to meet Mr. Peel, was arrested, and bound over in heavy penalties not to quit the kingdom. Sir Charles Saxton and Mr. Lidwill met at Calais, but without any bloodshed. Peel then offered to fight Mr. Lidwill as the proxy or representative of O'Connell, an absurd proposition, which was justly scouted by all concerned. The affair ended, therefore, in a storm of ridicule, which involved the minister and his opponent, and in feelings of personal enmity which were never afterwards subdued.

The chief achievement of the latter part of Mr. Peel's Irish administration was the establishment of the Irish constabulary—an admirably organized, well equipped, and well-disciplined body of men, scarcely inferior to the line regiments of the British army. In home

affairs he distinguished himself by his advocacy of his father's measure to reduce the daily period of the actual work of children employed in cotton mills to ten hours. Towards the close of the session of 1817, Mr. Abbott, the Speaker of the House of Commons, was removed to the Upper House with the title of Lord Colchester, and a vacancy occurring in the representation of the University of Oxford, Canning put himself forward as a candidate. Between Peel and Canning existed a bitter jealousy, and Peel, therefore, resolved to contest with him the suffrages of the University. In Lord Chancellor Eldon he found a potent supporter. Eldon was the bigot of bigots, and in his eyes Peel's greatest merit was his opposition to the Roman Catholics, and Canning's greatest crime his advocacy of their claims. Protected by Eldon, Peel secured a ready victory over his opponent, and his election for the University gave him the excuse, which he appears to have long desired, for resigning his arduous position as Irish Secretary (A.D. 1818).

The year 1819 was marked by important financial changes, in which the rising politician bore a prominent part; a part, by the way, that seriously influenced his later career. In a volume principally intended for youthful readers it is impossible for us to plunge into the abyss of political economy, and it is therefore difficult to indicate in any intelligible manner the course which Mr. Peel pursued, and the consequences which that course necessitated. During the urgency of the great European war a large circulation of inconvertible paper—*i. e.*, of bank notes—had prevailed in England, and payments in specie or bullion had been largely suspended. It was the object of a small but powerful body

of financial reformers to check the circulation of paper, and return to the issue of bullion. This party was led by Mr. Ricardo, who soon found in Robert Peel his ablest and most influential disciple. His propositions were supported in a most powerful and lucid speech, and adopted by the House with remarkable rapidity. By an Act founded upon Mr. Peel's resolutions the resumption of cash payments was authorized, on certain terms, after the 1st of February, 1820.

With reference to these financial theories it is possible that many opinions may exist; that their author will find as many supporters as antagonists; but with respect to his conduct on the disgraceful Peterloo "difficulty" his greatest admirers can only decide unfavourably. On the 16th of August, at Peterloo (or St. Peter's-field) near Manchester, an assemblage of men, women, and children had collected, at the requisition of Mr. Henry Hunt, then a popular demagogue, to take into consideration the necessity of parliamentary reform. Into the midst of this peaceful and harmless multitude plunged a body of yeomanry, trampling down many a victim, and cruelly sabreing others. A loud outcry arose in every part of the kingdom. Strange to say, Mr. Peel, though neither a member of the government nor in any way called upon to act as its apologist, voluntarily stepped forward to defend the unjustifiable massacre. Such a singular step can only be regarded as intended by Peel to intimate to Lord Liverpool that he was in want of office, though so experienced a tactician must surely have foreseen that the daily increasing weakness of the Liverpool cabinet would soon assure its downfall.

With the shameful proceedings against the unfor-

tunate Queen Caroline, Peel, like Canning, was too wary to connect himself, though his reticence like that of Canning secured the private enmity of George IV.

Meanwhile, the Roman Catholics were surely, if slowly, advancing towards a settlement of their long-disputed claims. Their justice could hardly be denied, except by those owls of party who can discern nothing clearly in the broad light of noon. There is no doubt that Peel already felt that the time for concession was near at hand. When, in April 21, a bill for the removal of many of their "disabilities" was carried through the Commons by a majority of twenty-one, the astute statesman significantly remarked that "though he could not conscientiously support a bill for the complete emancipation of the Catholics, he should, if such a measure met with the concurrence of the legislature, do his utmost to reconcile the Protestant community to it."

In January 1822, Peel entered upon what may be called the second stage of his political life by undertaking the responsible duties of Secretary of State for the Home Department, an office for which his impassible coolness, his unvarying urbanity, his tact, and plausibility eminently fitted him. In this position he was of particular service to the administration; no man, probably, having ever possessed such skill in the preparation of dry details, and in putting the abstrusest facts before the House with logical lucidity. It must be owned, too, that he eminently possessed the art of making the worse appear the better cause, and that he was a complete master of the political science of "candid sophistication."

He remained in the Liverpool cabinet until the

death of its chief brought about its sudden dissolution. To the ministry formed by Canning he refused to lend his assistance, but it must be admitted that he did so in no unfair or churlish spirit. He put forward as the ground of his refusal his unwillingness to concede to the Roman Catholics the claims which Canning and his adherents advocated; but the fact is, that while he was not unwilling to act with Canning on terms of equality, and under some common leader, he was indisposed to hold office in an administration of which Canning would be the chief. During the bitter struggle which that illustrious man maintained, with a host of foes, for the few months of his short-lived government, Peel gave way to no ungenerous mode of warfare, and appears to have sincerely regretted the premature death which closed the statesman's career in his brief hour of victory.

After the short-lived and disastrous administration of Lord Goderich, which is historically remembered from its implication in the "untoward event of Navarino," the Duke of Wellington was commanded by George IV. to attempt the formation of a strong government, of which he was designed to be ostensible head, but Robert Peel the guiding spirit. Amongst the leading officials were Mr. Goulbourn as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Lyndhurst as Lord Chancellor, Lord Ellenborough as Lord Privy Seal, Mr. Huskisson as Secretary for the Colonies, Lord Palmerston as Secretary at War, and Mr. Grant as President of the Board of Trade. Apparently, a long lease of power would necessarily be enjoyed by a government so strong in men of ability, character, and experience, and few men, it is probable, foresaw that no long time

would elapse before this prosperous and potential administration would be compelled to advocate the very measure which all its principal members had most strenuously opposed. If there were any prophets capable of looking so far and comprehending so much, Mr. Peel was undoubtedly among them; but we believe he was the only man in the Duke of Wellington's cabinet who had conceived the idea that concession to the Roman Catholics was only a question of a few months' delay.

Parliament met on the 29th of January, 1828. The first important legislative measure to which its attention was directed, the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, emanated from the opposition, and was brought forward by Lord John Russell. The Corporation Act materially aggrieved the Protestant Dissenters, or rather, had that effect when carried into operation by unscrupulous opponents. The Test Act had been passed in Charles II.'s reign as a means of checking the Papistical tendencies of the king and his brother, afterwards James II. Both required every person elected a member of a corporate body, to take the sacrament, according to the ritual of the Anglican church, within a certain number of days from his election. Lord John Russell's motion for a committee of inquiry was carried, despite Mr. Peel's lukewarm opposition, by a majority of 44 (February 26, 1828). With equal lukewarmness the Home Secretary once more resisted the claims of the Catholics, when urged with signal ability and unanswerable logic by Sir Francis Burdett, and was defeated by a majority of six. It was evident that the end drew near.

It was accelerated by a master stroke of O'Connell's. Over at least one-half of Ireland the Catholic Associa-

tion, a regularly organized body of agitators, supported by the annual subscriptions of all classes of Irishmen, exercised a paramount influence, so that "a single word from the association was of power to deprive the Protestant clergyman of his tithe, or the Protestant landlord of his rent." Growing bolder as they grew stronger, they now issued a species of manifesto in which Peel and Wellington were denounced as the lasting enemies of Ireland, and it was declared that any Irishman who should henceforth accept office under their administration would incur the strenuous opposition of the association, and be regarded as the foe of his country. At this time Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, an Irish gentleman of fair character and respectable estate, and a warm advocate of Catholic emancipation, was appointed President of the Board of Trade. His re-election for the county of Clare became necessary, and it was thought by the English government that his high character, his influence in the county as a liberal landlord, and his opinions on the great topic of the day, would certainly ensure his success. But the association were determined to crush him with their vengeance. O'Connell declared himself a candidate, and was returned at the head of the poll with a triumphant majority.

"Reflective men," says Mr. Doubleday, "now felt that the hour of Catholic emancipation had struck. The anomalous state of the law of exclusion had enabled Mr. O'Connell to deliver this final blow. As a Catholic, he was not ineligible at the hustings. There was no law to prevent his nomination, nor to preclude the sheriff from receiving the votes which the Catholic voters, almost to a man, crowded to give him.

He was only excluded from his seat in the House of Commons by an oath, which, when tendered, he must refuse to take. But he could knock legally at the door of the legislature and demand admittance, and, in the last resort, demand to be heard at the bar of the House in defence of the rights of the electors of Clare. This was a spectacle which thinking men saw could not be continued. After this example, a general election would have enabled half the counties and three-fourths of the boroughs of Ireland to send Catholic members to the gate of the legislature, to thunder there, and demand their rights for six millions of Irish Catholics. In the then temper of the British mind this was not to be hazarded, and from that hour the government unquestionably saw that the only course left them was concession." And upon this course they secretly determined.

Parliament opened on the 5th of February, 1829, and was recommended in the king's speech "to take into their deliberate consideration the whole condition of Ireland, and to review the laws which impose civil disabilities on the king's Roman Catholic subjects; to consider whether the removal of these disabilities can be effected consistently with the full and permanent security of the establishments in Church and State, with the maintenance of the reformed religion as established by law, and of the rights and privileges of the clergy of the realm and of the churches committed to their care, and to enter upon the consideration with that temper and moderation which could alone ensure the successful issue of such deliberations." Never did king's speech produce a greater excitement! Both the Catholics and anti-Catholics were taken by surprise, for

neither party had ever believed that such a concession would have been made by Peel and Wellington. And in truth the ministers had to battle with serious difficulties. No facile task to soothe and cajole their principal adherents, to whom this new policy seemed a betrayal of their religion and country! No easy matter to extort from the king a reluctant assent!

The Emancipation Bill was introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Secretary Peel on the 5th of March, in one of his most logical and argumentative speeches. In fact, he so clearly and convincingly proved the justice, necessity, and policy of the proposed emancipation that his opponents could only wonder he had so long resisted a measure whose merits were apparently incontestible. They did not all perceive that Peel was "the statesman of expediency," and that when he had once satisfied himself a measure was needful he found it easy enough to convince himself it was also wise, generous, and just. The conclusion of this famous speech was in Peel's best manner, and may for that reason be quoted here:—

"I well know, sir, that, instead of acting as I have done, I might have taken a course more popular perhaps, and certainly more selfish. I might have held language much more acceptable to the friends with whom I have long acted, and to the constituents I have lately lost. In the course I have taken I have been mainly influenced by the anxious desire to provide for the maintenance of Protestant interests, and for the security of Protestant establishments. This is my defence. This is my consolation. This shall be my revenge.

"Sir, I will hope for the best. God grant that the

moral storm may be appeased; that the turbid waters of strife may be settled and composed; and that, having found their just level, they may be mingled with equal flow in one clear and common stream. But if these expectations were to be disappointed; if, unhappily, civil strife and contention shall survive the restoration of political privilege; if there really be something inherent in the spirit of the Roman Catholic religion which disdains equality, and will be contented with nothing but ascendency; still am I contented to run the hazard of the change. The contest—if it be inevitable—will be fought for other objects and with other arms. The struggle, sir, will then be not for the abolition of civil distinctions, but for the predominance of an intolerant religion.

"Sir, I contemplate the progress of that struggle with pain; but I look forward to its issue with perfect composure and confidence. We shall have discerned the great moral alliance that has hitherto given strength to the cause of the Roman Catholics. We shall range on our side the illustrious authorities which have heretofore been enlisted upon theirs. The rallying cry of 'Civil Liberty' will then be all our own. We shall enter the field with the full assurance of victory; armed with the consciousness of having done justice, and of being in the right; backed by the unanimous feeling of England—by the firm union of orthodoxy and dissent—by the applauding voice of Scotland; and, if other aid be requisite, cheered by the sympathies of every free state in either hemisphere, and by the wishes and prayers of every good man, and every free man, in whatever clime, or under whatever form of government his lot may have been cast!"

The third reading of the Emancipation Bill was carried in the House of Commons by a majority of 178. In the House of Peers the success of the measure was due to the vast influence of the Duke of Wellington. It was finally carried by the votes of 216 peers against 112, and received the royal assent—most reluctantly yielded, and not until the king had disgraced himself and disgusted his ministers by a series of paltry evasions and dirty manœuvres, intermixed with a profusion of imbecile tears and meaningless embraces—on the 13th of April, 1829.

Thus was effected Peel's first great sacrifice of himself and his party. It was an act of the most incontrovertible justice, but would have been effected by any other statesman with better grace. No other statesman, however, was prepared for the task, and it is to Peel's credit that he shrank from neither obloquy, persecution, nor malice, when he had once resolved upon yielding to Ireland the boon she had so long prayed for.

And in that Ireland all, at first, was joy and gratitude. The "Sun of Erin," so long shrouded in mists and shadows, had indeed arisen, and throughout the whole length and breadth of the land poured his rays of light and love. Alas! a cloud soon appeared on the horizon; at first, "no bigger than a man's hand," it broadened gradually into a portentous darkness. O'Connell had enjoyed now for some years *the luxuries of agitation*, and his very success rendered him the more unwilling to surrender his position of pride and power. It was true that the emancipation of the Catholics had deprived him of his monster grievance, but a mind so fertile easily lighted upon a new sorrow. He soon secured a fresh weapon with which to attack the Saxons,

and the *mot d'ordre* went forth—"Repeal of the Union!" Happily for Ireland he was destined in his new crusade to meet with a signal discomfiture, and a sore defeat; but his project, at the outset, largely added to the already overwhelming embarrassments of the Peel and Wellington government. The open aggressions of Russia upon Turkey; the perturbed condition of France, which was trembling on the brink of revolution; the unsatisfactory state of the finances of England; insurrections in Ireland; distress and discontent in Lancashire and Yorkshire; a sovereign rapidly sinking into hopeless imbecility; such were the sad and gloomy questions which faced the ministry at the close of the Parliamentary session on the 24th of June, 1829, and such were the difficulties with which they had still to grapple when the two Houses again met, on the 4th of February, 1830.

In England, Parliamentary reform is generally considered a panacea for all kinds of distress or misgovernment. When the stomach of the operative is empty his brain seems to grow keener, and he finds time to inquire whether he has a fair representation in the National Council. Certainly, at the time of which we are writing, the Imperial Parliament very imperfectly represented the wishes, opinions, or sympathies of the people; and it was evident to all thoughtful observers, that radical changes were imperatively needed, which, if not yielded with a good grace, would, sooner or later, be extorted by the popular will Large cities had sprung into prosperity which were absolutely without voice in Parliament, while the half-dozen electors of Gatton, Old Sarum, or Bletchingly, returned one or two representatives, the nominees of some powerful peer or wealthy boroughmonger. Rightly or wrongly, it was

considered, by a numerous body, that if these large towns were represented the popular influence in the legislature would be considerably increased. The government would be less subservient to aristocratic interests and class prejudices, and thus the general welfare of the country would be better promoted, and the perils which then beset it more easily vanquished.

Parliamentary reform, then, became in the year 1830 the watchword of a numerous and important party, at whose head were placed the great Whig leaders, Earl Grey, Lord John Russell, Lord Althorpe, Lord Howick, and Mr. Brougham. On the 23rd of February, 1830, Lord John (now Earl) Russell made a formidable attack upon the stronghold of the anti-reformers with his motion, that the franchises of three boroughs which had been proved to be notoriously corrupt should be transferred to the populous manufacturing towns of Leeds, Manchester, and Birmingham. It seems strange to us, now-a-days, that a motion so moderate in tone, and so obviously just, could have met with any serious opposition, but by the majority of an *Un*reformed Parliament it was regarded as little less than revolutionary. Mr. Peel opposed it in an able but sophistical speech, and the government defeated Lord John by 188 votes against 140.

The reformers, however, were not cast down by their repulse. They too well understood the nature of the struggle upon which they had entered, and were urged forward too irresistibly by an exasperated and excited nation. And at this crisis an event occurred which added fresh fuel to their hopes, while it dealt a heavy blow at the stability of the Peel and Wellington cabinet—the death of George IV. (June 26, 1830), and the accession of

the Duke of Clarence as William IV. Between the past and the present sovereigns it was felt that a great difference existed. From George IV. there was everything to be feared; from William IV. everything to be hoped. He was known to be fond of popularity; of a genial and not illiberal nature; with excellent intentions and few, if any, prejudices. In many respects, an admirable sovereign for a constitutional kingdom.

Scarcely had William IV. been proclaimed, when another event excited the imaginations and stimulated the exertions of the reformers. The downfall of Charles X. of France, the revolution of the Three Days (July, 1830), and the election to the French throne of a constitutional king in the person of Louis Philippe, shot with electric warmth through the hearts of nations, and especially in England created a powerful and living sympathy. It is no wonder, then, that the elections for a new Parliament, which took place in the autumn of this year, resulted in a considerable accession to the ranks of the liberal opposition; and the feelings of the nation were significantly shown by the triumphant return of Brougham for Yorkshire, and Hume for Middlesex, in the face of the most determined opposition on the part of the aristocratic landowners and wealthy "large-acred squires."

The new Parliament met on the 2nd of November, 1830. In both Houses preparations were instantly made for a desperate campaign, and in the Peers Earl Grey openly declared his ardent desire for a measure of extensive reform. On the part of the government the Duke of Wellington replied with his usual candour, plainly expressing his conviction that "everything as

it was" represented perfection, that the English constitution, as it then existed, was the model of constitutions, and the English Parliament, as it was then constructed, the best of all possible Parliaments. Mr. Peel, as ministerial leader in the Commons, spoke in a more guarded tone. As his manner was, he left himself a loophole of escape. The duke stated openly enough that no reform was needed, and to none would he consent; Mr. Peel "did not conceal from the House that a 'moderate reform' might, under certain circumstances, be introduced with advantage; but then"—why just then—"he did not see the bounds to which the limitation was to be fixed." From which sagacious observers concluded that the statesman of expediency who had granted Catholic Emancipation, might not, at some future time, be unwilling to concede Parliamentary Reform.

On the 15th of November, a vote of "want of confidence," proposed by Sir Henry Parnell, was carried against the government by a majority of twenty-nine. Ministers immediately resigned, and the king intrusted the duty of forming a Whig administration to the hands of the venerable Earl Grey. Peel, now by the death of his father, Sir Robert Peel, became the recognized leader of a powerful Tory opposition. The new government included Lord Brougham as Lord Chancellor, the Marquis of Lansdowne as President of the Council, Lord Melbourne, Home Secretary, Lord Palmerston as Foreign Secretary, Lord John Russell as Paymaster-General, Sir James Graham as First Lord of the Admiralty, and the Hon. E. J. Stanley (now Earl of Derby) as Secretary for Ireland.

The Reform Bill—as after the lapse of thirty years

it may still be called—was introduced into the House of Commons on the 1st of March, 1831, by Lord John Russell. It may fairly be said by its comprehensiveness, and the boldness of the changes which it inaugurated, to have surprised both the friends and foes of reform. A measure so thorough in its character had been expected by neither, but Lord John and his colleagues rightly saw that success could only be obtained by enlisting on their behalf the hopes and sympathies of the people, and that the people would not bestir themselves for the sake of any delusive sham or timid half measure. It gave votes to a large body of non-electors—to all inhabitants of cities or boroughs rented at not less than £10 per annum, and to all inhabitants of counties rented at not less than £50 leasehold and £10 copyhold. It totally disfranchised sixty close boroughs, and from forty-seven others took away one member. Numerous new boroughs were created, and additional members given to various counties and populous towns.

The introduction of the bill was opposed in a speech of great power and plausibility by Sir Robert Peel, who, however, took occasion to hint that, as "a private individual," he was of opinion that certain alterations in the representative system might have been introduced with advantage. The second reading (March 21st), was carried by a majority of one only. The position of the government was now very difficult, and the excitement in the country almost bordered upon the furor of revolution. It was evident that either the government must resign or dissolve Parliament. If they resigned it was equally evident that none but a reform ministry could fill their places. In this dilemma a Mr. Bessett made a motion calling upon the House to

inquire into a system of bribery and corruption prevalent, he said, at Liverpool. This motion was made a convenient stalking-horse for a fierce attack upon the ministerial measure of Reform. The opposition prolonged the debate to a late hour, and then, in spite of the strenuous resistance of the government, carried its adjournment by a majority of twenty-two. So decisive a defeat the ministry could not overlook, and accordingly, on the 22nd of April, after a scene of unparalleled excitement, Parliament was dissolved.

Earl Grey and his colleagues soon found that their bold step was even more successful than they had anticipated. The country fully understood the question put before it, the Reform Bill or no Reform Bill, and with astonishing unanimity replied, "the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill." When the new Parliament met (June 21, 1831), it was clear to everybody that the government were supported by a powerful majority, and Sir Robert Peel plainly expressed his conviction that further resistance was useless. He retained, he said, his own opinion, but admitted that public opinion was contrary to it. Lord John reintroduced the Reform Bill on the 24th of June. It had undergone some improvements, and certain minor, but objectionable changes had been expunged; fifty-seven close boroughs were disfranchised, and from forty others one member each was taken. The second reading, July 4, was carried by a majority of 136, and, after a series of vexatious delays promoted by the futile tactics of the Tories, the bill passed through the House of Commons on the 21st of September, 1831, by a majority of 109 votes. It was not destined to meet with such success in the House of Lords. There indeed, sat the great

landed proprietors, whom it proposed to deprive of their snug boroughs and pleasant nomineeships, and it could hardly be supposed they regarded with any favour this measure of wholesale "confiscation." Accordingly, when Earl Grey moved the second reading (October 3), the Peers, who had learnt no lesson from the result of the Catholic Emancipation struggle, rejected it by 199 against 158, that is by a majority of forty-one. The country instantly sprang into a state of revolutionary agitation; riots and incendiary fires broke out in many places. Reform clubs denounced the Peers in the most violent language, and everywhere the feeling was enthusiastic for "the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill." Nor was there less determination in the House of Commons. A resolution expressive of entire confidence in Earl Grey's government was carried, after a heated debate, by the immense majority of 131.

The government, after so decisive a move, could not retrace its steps. It prorogued Parliament for a few weeks, and when it met again Lord John Russell once more introduced the Reform Bill (December 12), though with some slight amendments, such as disfranchising fifty-six boroughs instead of fifty-seven, and depriving thirty instead of forty boroughs of one member each. Sir Robert Peel still continued his opposition. He plainly avowed that he felt its uselessness; but, he said, it is necessary this opposition should be maintained as "a bar to further concessions hereafter. If the whole House were now to join in giving way, it would have less power to resist future changes." The bill passed through the Commons triumphantly, being read for the third time on the 22nd of March, 1832. It was then transferred to undergo the ordeal of the Upper House. There

it passed the first and second readings, with very slight majorities. A rally was then made by all the Tory peers, and on the bill going into committee, the government was defeated by a majority of thirty-five. Earl Grey and his colleagues immediately tendered their resignations, after having ascertained that the king shrank from consenting to the only scheme by which the ministry could subdue the hostile majority in the Lords—namely, the creation of a batch of forty or fifty new peers.

The Duke of Wellington, with his wonted courage, but less than his wonted sagacity, now undertook to form an anti-reform administration. Had he succeeded it is probable that England would have trembled on the very verge of civil war, and that the excited multitude, no longer contented with an amendment of the constitution, would have demanded its reconstruction. There can be no question that at this crisis Sir Robert Peel rendered a great service to his country. He saw that a financial panic prevailed. He fully comprehended the nature of the distress which already existed, and the extent to which it would increase if the feelings of the nation were further excited. He refused to accept office in the duke's projected ministry, and, like a house of cards, it tumbled to the ground.

Earl Grey was now charged with the duty of reconstructing his government, and the king, in his own writing, intimated to the hostile peers his earnest request that they would abandon any further opposition to the Reform Bill. On the 4th of June, therefore, that famous measure was passed in a House of 128 peers, by 106 against 22. On the 7th of June it received the royal assent by commission. On the 16th of August

Parliament was prorogued, previous to its formal dissolution, by the king in person. And the first reformed House of Commons was summoned to meet in January 1833.

Sir Robert Peel was too acute a statesman not to foresee that the immediate political result of the Reform Bill would be to strengthen the party which had carried it, and to give the Earl Grey ministry an overwhelming majority in the new House. It seemed, indeed, to casual observers that for half a dozen lustres at the least the Whigs would enjoy a lease of unquestioned power. Into no such error did Sir Robert fall. He saw that by a large body of the people the Reform Bill had been accepted as a panacea for all their ills: poverty was to vanish, taxation was to decrease, merit was to be acknowledged, vested interests should disappear, and a political millennium dawn before Parliamentary reform! He saw too that these extravagant hopes could not be fulfilled; that the Whig aristocracy was as unwilling as the Tory aristocracy to level class distinctions, inaugurate organic changes, or transform methodical England into a manufactory of revolutions! He justly apprehended what would follow. The men who now panegyrized Grey, and Russell, and Althorpe as the saviours of their country would be the first in the hour of their bitter disappointment to denounce them as traitors and hypocrites, and to accept in the revulsion a new order of things and men. It only remained, then, for the Tory statesman and his followers to bide their time, and the coveted enjoyments of place and power would again be placed within their reach.

It chanced that a series of circumstances soon arose which placed the Grey government in a false

position at an earlier date than even Sir Robert Peel had anticipated. The first difficulty was with Ireland. Catholic emancipation had failed in curing its chronic disease, and the country was at this period convulsed from north to south with rapine, outrage, and intimidation. It fell, therefore, to a Liberal ministry to propose a strong remedy for these disorders, and in February 1833 Lord Althorpe introduced a Coercion Bill. The measure was supported by Sir Robert Peel in a powerful and effective speech, and passed the Commons by a majority of 259; but not the less, out of doors, did it tell unfavourably against the government. A Tory ministry could have done no more, and for a Whig cabinet to sanction such arbitrary laws was to take up the blood-stained weapons of their opponents.

The next important measure was the abolition of slavery in the West India colonies, which was carried with a degree of exultant haste very creditable to the philanthropy, but not to the financial prudence of the government. Sir Robert vainly warned the House against its unseemly precipitation. Slavery was abolished; £20,000,000 were paid as compensation to the West Indian planters; and the West India colonies for nearly half a century were ruined. The object aimed at was admirable, and worthy of a great nation; but it was achieved in an unwise and imprudent manner, and many of the warmest friends of negro emancipation must now feel that England has incurred, as Sir Robert Peel prophesied, "the deep responsibility of having by a precipitate attempt to ameliorate the condition of her own slaves, aggravated the hardships of those who were exposed

to a more bitter fate in many other parts of the world."

The New Poor Law Bill introduced by Lord Althorpe on the 17th of April, 1834, was also supported by Sir Robert Peel—somewhat jesuitically, perhaps, for he could not have failed to foresee the discontent which it would excite among the labouring classes, and the consequent unpopularity of the government which had proposed it. But though the different measures we have enumerated had deprived Earl Grey's ministry of the splendid prestige with which the Reform Bill had surrounded it, that ministry was as yet too powerfully seated to be overturned—though it might be shaken—by any attack of the opposition. It fell from its own dissensions. The time had arrived for the renewal of the Irish Coercion Bill. Lord Althorpe, the ministerial leader in the Commons, comprehending the doubtful position which the government already occupied, was unwilling to renew it unless it was considerably mitigated. To any show of lenity, however, Earl Grey was decidedly opposed, and Lord Althorpe accordingly sent in his resignation. The cabinet was then broken up, for without the influence and support of Lord Althorpe in the Commons the venerable earl was unwilling and unable to carry on the administration.

It was at first supposed that a Tory cabinet would be constructed, but the Whigs were as yet too powerful. The witty, urbane, and well-bred Lord Melbourne was inducted into the premiership, and Lord Althorpe consented to resume the Chancellorship of the Exchequer and the leadership of the House of Commons.

Parliament was prorogued on the 15th of August,

and it seemed to all parties that the Melbourne administration, weak as it was in men and measures, would enjoy a twelvemonth's lease of power. But if the country were content to endure it, at court it was by no means tolerable, and William IV. only waited for a suitable opportunity to get rid of it. This opportunity offered in the death of Earl Spencer, November 10, 1834, which necessitated the removal of his son, Lord Althorpe, to the Upper House. The king now thought fit to assume that the government was too much weakened in the Commons to be able to conduct the affairs of the country in a satisfactory manner, and ventured on the bold step—for though within the limits of his prerogative it *was* bold, and perhaps, too, unconstitutional—of dismissing Lord Melbourne and his colleagues, though they possessed a majority in Parliament! The Duke of Wellington was charged by the king with the duty of constructing an administration, and with characteristic courage took upon himself, provisionally, half a dozen offices, as Secretary of State and Chancellor of the Exchequer. But no one knew better than the duke that Sir Robert Peel was the sole statesman in the Conservative party who could establish an efficient government. Sir Robert and his family were then at Rome, but, summoned by a special messenger, he reached London on the 9th of December, and immediately entered upon the task of constructing a Conservative administration. We advisedly use the word "Conservative." Sir Robert, knowing that the name and principles of Toryism stank in the nostrils of the people, had created a new party, with new feelings and sympathies, and had christened it with a new name. The "Tory" had clung with a

death-grasp to every abuse, however offensive, because it was part and parcel of our "glorious constitution." The Conservative was wisely jealous that the landmarks of the constitution should remain intact, but was wisely willing to amend where amendment was necessary, to restore dilapidations and remove the excrescences of corruption and decay. In a word, Sir Robert Peel's Conservatism was intended as the "golden mean" between the jealous prejudices of a bigoted Toryism on the one hand, and the extravagant innovations of a destructive Liberalism on the other. And if Conservatism has gradually, day by day, and hour by hour, become more liberal in its tendencies and more comprehensive in its views, the credit is mainly due to the sagacious example and powerful influence of Sir Robert Peel, who, cradled in the arbitrary creed of Eldon and Sidmouth, had nevertheless the courage and the wisdom to bury that creed "deeper than did ever plummet sound," when he discovered that the country had outgrown it.

Sir Robert's first Conservative administration had however but a butterfly existence. It contained many able men, and put before the country a very attractive programme, but it came *too soon*. A reaction in favour of Conservatism had certainly been induced by the Whig party's coquetry with O'Connell, and their enactment of the admirable but then much abused Poor Law system; but the tide was not yet sufficiently powerful to float Sir Robert and his friends into the haven of office. Much suspicion, too, had been excited by the mode of action adopted by the king, and it was felt that not Parliament but the Court had dismissed the Melbourne

administration. The Peel cabinet was, therefore, subjected to an overwhelming attack at the very opening of Parliament. The choice of a Speaker for the House of Commons was the *cheval de bataille*. The Whigs put forward Mr. Abercromby, the Conservatives Sir Charles Manners Sutton, and the latter was defeated by a majority of ten. A further and a final blow was given to the ministerialists by the success of Lord John Russell's attack on the temporalities of the Irish Protestant Church. Sir Robert resisted his opponent with admirable skill, but he could not convince the Whig majority. Defeated after several skirmishes by twenty-seven votes, he found it necessary to tender his resignation, and after a six months' reign his government came to an end.

The king, *bongré, malgré*, was now compelled to recall Lord Melbourne to his councils, and a Whig cabinet once more swayed the destinies of the nation. Its position was a delicate one. The sovereign did not honour it with his confidence. He was growing aged and infirm; and his intellect, never comprehensive nor far-seeing, could not interpret the signs of the times, nor pierce the clouds looming up in the future. In the House of Commons it possessed a majority, but that majority depended on the support of the Irish members—a support of which any accidental change of policy might deprive it. The opposition, on the other hand, was compact and numerous, well disciplined, and full of confidence in its leader. It seemed apparent, therefore, that after a brief interval Sir Robert would be again recalled to power, and with better chances than before of retaining it.

This anticipation was not fulfilled. For years the Melbourne ministry dragged on a feeble existence, contriving, nevertheless, to accomplish several important legislative reforms, among which may be named with commendation its Municipal Reform Act (1835). The session of 1836 was occupied in a series of strategical movements between Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel, in which the former obtained a victory, but not without such severe losses as greatly to weaken the government of which he was now the guiding spirit. The session of 1837 opened gloomily for the Whigs, but they were saved from any premature disaster by the death of William IV., which occurred on the 20th of June. The accession of the youthful Victoria was their respite. The young queen had been bred up in liberal principles, and was attached by various associations to the leaders of the liberal party. By tacit consent, then, the remainder of the session passed undisturbed by party hostilities. Parliament was dissolved on the 17th of July. A general election took place. The first Parliament of Queen Victoria assembled on the 17th of November, 1837, and presented the two great bodies of Whigs and Tories in much the same degree of relative strength as before.

The empire was, at this time, in one of its periodical crises. Rebellion in Canada, discontent in Ireland, poor-law agitation in England, and the gradual spread among the ignorant masses of the principles of Chartism—these were the difficulties which clouded the commencement of the new reign. It was now, too, that the question of corn-law repeal was actively brought before the House. Lord John Russell con-

sented to the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the operation of the corn laws, but Sir Robert Peel took up a more decided position, and advocated their justice and expediency. Mr. Villiers, the repeal champion, by the united efforts of both the government and the opposition, was completely defeated.

Sir Robert was not always in accord with the government. A ministerial measure with reference to certain troubles that had broken out in Jamaica he opposed with all his energy, and with so much success that the government only secured the nominal majority of *five*. Such a majority was not a working majority, and Lord John and his colleagues accordingly resigned, and Sir Robert Peel was summoned by her Majesty to form a new administration. His efforts were, however, unexpectedly fruitless. Sir Robert had wished to remove from their offices near the Queen's person the Whig ladies connected with the late administration; but her Majesty expressed a great repugnance to such a step, and Sir Robert immediately surrendered into her hands the trust with which she had honoured him. There was no alternative but to recall the Melbourne-Russell administration, which accordingly re-entered office under very inauspicious circumstances, and for two sessions longer held the reins of government with trembling hands. Under the careful discipline and wise management of Sir Robert the Conservative party grew daily in strength and influence, and Sir Robert himself was everywhere regarded as the coming statesman who was to raise the nation out of the Slough of Despond into which it had fallen.

The Melbourne government at length fell to pieces. Parliament was dissolved in 1841 in the hope that elections would prove favourable to the Whig party, but the country decided against them in a most significant manner. When the new Parliament met a motion of want of confidence was carried by the Conservative party with a majority of 91, a state of things which has never since existed. The two great bodies of Liberals and Conservatives having now no very broad ground of policy, nor any distinct demarcation have approximated to an equality of numbers: and the famous party fights which formerly enlivened the debates of Parliament are now but rarely attempted, and always with indecisive results. The great change which since Sir Robert Peel's death has come over the spirit of parties may best be indicated by the fact, that in the government formed by Sir Robert Peel in 1841 were included Sir James Graham, Lord Stanley (now Earl of Derby), the Earl of Lincoln (now Duke of Newcastle), and Mr. Gladstone, the latter two now in office as the uncompromising opponents of their former colleague.

The country in 1841 had certainly a strong government. With a working majority of 91 Sir Robert Peel might carry anything, or accomplish anything, and the Liberal party seemed utterly annihilated. Most men believed that it could never be reconstructed, and many considered that Sir Robert was virtually minister for life. In these sanguine anticipations the great body of the Conservative party shared. How far they were realized, it is now our business to show.

The agitation for the repeal of the corn laws—in

other words, free trade in corn—had now begun to acquire consistency, and to assume proportions which no ministry could ignore. To free trade, the majority which supported Sir Robert was violently opposed. There was scarce a farmer in England who did not believe in the efficacy of protection, and that to repeal the duties which virtually prohibited the import into England of foreign grain, would be equivalent to the complete destruction of the agricultural interest. Some change, however, was necessary, since the national distress was greatly aggravated by the high price of corn; and Sir Robert proposed the ingenious accommodation of a *sliding scale*. That is, the government duty payable upon foreign corn varied in amount proportionately to the variation in price of home-grown corn; and the object was to prevent the importation of foreign corn at so low a rate as to injure the sale of home-grown corn, and lessen the profits of the agriculturists. Thus, when wheat sold at home at 50*s*. per quarter, the duty upon foreign wheat mounted up to 20*s*. When wheat was scarce at home and reached 66*s*. per quarter, the duty on foreign wheat sank to 6*s*.

On the other hand the Whigs, as represented by their leader, Lord John Russell, had proposed as a compromise between the wheat-growers and the public a fixed duty of 8*s*. per quarter upon all foreign corn, while the adherents of the Anti-Corn Law League, who were rapidly increasing in number and influence, contended for Free Trade, *pur et simple*, and the total abolition of all import duties on corn and grain. They argued that the public had a right to buy at all times their wheat at the lowest possible

rate; and that as the British farmers could not supply enough for British consumption no obstacle should be thrown in the way of obtaining sufficient resources from abroad; and they pointed out that by taking from the corn-growing countries what alone they had to dispose of—corn—we should enable them in their turn to purchase of us what formed our principal staple—the results of our wonderful manufacturing industry. If Manchester bought corn from Russia, Russia, in return, would buy cotton from Manchester.

Sir Robert, however, and his majority easily disposed of the most trenchant arguments. A counter movement by Lord John Russell gave 349 votes in favour of the ministerial scheme, and 226 against it; and the Sliding Scale for a time became the law of the land. The agriculturists not the less felt that a blow had been struck at their "vested interests;" and the germ of discontent was secretly planted in the bosom of the Conservative party.

The minister had next to deal with the alarming deficit in the revenue, which had grown in six years to an aggregate of £10,072,638. It was estimated that the expenditure for the year 1843 would exceed the income by no less an amount than £2,570,000. Indirect taxation had already been carried as far as the patience of the people would admit, and it appeared to Sir Robert that the only resource was a direct assessment upon income—in a word, the income-tax. He, therefore, recommended that a tax of sevenpence in the pound should be levied upon all incomes exceeding £100, and he succeeded in carrying through his project. It was, indeed, proposed as a temporary measure, but from that date to this the country has

been unable to get rid of it. Nor, were it apportioned with more equality, and levied with less rigour, would there be anything more objectionable in the income tax than in any other impost.

Sir Robert's next great measure, and one which served to revive a feeling of distrust on the part of many of his supporters, was his bold and sagacious revision of the tariff (May 10, 1842), when he swept off the custom duties from a long list of minor articles, and diminished them on many others. In the speech with which he introduced his proposal he made a remarkable declaration: "I believe that, on the general principle of free trade, there is now no great difference of opinion, and that all agree in the general rule that 'We should purchase in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest.'" It is true that he went on to except from this principle "the corn laws and sugar duties;" but we think that it cannot be doubted that the great statesman's mind, with its usual tenacity of apprehension, had already begun to embrace the doctrines of free trade in their fullest and widest extent. It is evident that many of his Conservative supporters believed such to be the case, and began to suspect that the statesman who carried Catholic emancipation by the aid of its very opponents, meditated another betrayal of his party, and with a Conservative majority would eventually accomplish free trade.

Ireland now began to assert itself, as was its wont, a thorn in the side of the ministry. Between O'Connell and Peel there prevailed an absolute personal hostility; and the agitator, who had been tolerably quiet under the sway of the Melbourne administration, now commenced an audacious career of open war-

fare against the Imperial government. He began in earnest his crusade—a crusade whose fruitlessness his sagacity must from the first have foreseen—for the Repeal of the Union, and set on foot the vast organisation of the Repeal Association. "It is not easy," says an able writer, "to conceive what Mr. O'Connell and those in his confidence really expected from the extraordinary agitation then set on foot; but, perhaps, the most probable guess is that they hoped, by bringing the country to the very verge of insurrection, to intimidate the ministry into some compromise, which might enable O'Connell to take fresh ground for a renewed assault on the Church and the power of the English landlords, who possess the greater portion of the soil of Ireland."

But O'Connell's position was radically weak, and its weakness was seen by no one more clearly than by Sir Robert Peel. In the Irish Agitator's early struggle for Catholic emancipation he had been backed by public opinion in England itself. He was supported by the Whigs and Reformers; and even his opponents were by no means very resolute in their opposition. But no British party could be got together to advocate the Repeal of the Union, which was regarded by most Englishmen as synonymous with the entire separation of Ireland from England. O'Connell, therefore, could only depend on the peasantry of Ireland, on monster meetings at Tara and Clontarf, on excitable appeals to excited imaginations; all of little real utility against the overwhelming power of Great Britain.

The Agitator and his adherents were, for a time, allowed to run their tether, and to utter much treasonable language at repeal banquets, undisturbed by

the ministry. Sir Robert Peel, whose judgment of mankind was almost infallible, knew well the game he meant to play, and let the agitation run riot, as if he too were stunned by the uproar. The truth was, the Premier knew right well that *insurrection* was not intended by Mr. O'Connell and the Catholic priesthood, by whom he was zealously aided, though *intimidation* was; and feigning to *be* intimidated, he suffered the repealers to proceed, step by step, until a colorable case, on which to found a legal prosecution, should be created by their want of caution and over-confidence in their own game. This, accordingly, after many months of violent and vehement movement on the part of the repealers, was at length effected, and the blow was suddenly, but coolly and resolutely, struck.

O'Connell announced a monster demonstration at Clontarf, on the 8th of October, and great preparations were made to give an air of triumph and éclat to the meeting. But on the 7th of October, the day before the meeting was to take place, destined to strike "Peel and his myrmidons" with terror, a proclamation suddenly appeared, "stigmatizing the intended assemblage as the work of factious and seditious men, and warning all well-disposed persons not to attend to it." The blow fell heavily upon O'Connell, and he lost his temper. He felt the game was up. Government did not stop in its resolute course. On the 14th of the month, O'Connell and eight of his chief associates were arrested on charges of conspiracy, unlawfully assembling, and sedition. A verdict of "guilty" was actually obtained from an Irish jury; and though, on a legal quibble, the character of the

sentences was afterwards altered by a decision of the House of Lords, the repeal cause and its apostles were utterly crushed. They were beaten in the most summary and ridiculous manner, not by charges of bayonets and rounds of musketry, but by the pleas of half-a-score of lawyers.

Upon the Bank Charter Act, a financial measure of doubtful propriety, which was passed in the session of 1844, we need not linger. Its object is, to limit the paper credit of the kingdom in proportion to the amount of available bullion above £14,000,000 retained in the hands of the Bank of England; but as its suspension has occasionally been necessary, it seems reasonable to suppose that its principles are not altogether incontrovertible.

The session of 1844, with this exception, produced no remarkable enactment, but 1845 was designed to usher in such a series of events as probably neither Sir Robert nor his opponents had anticipated in their wildest dreams.

Having conquered the repeal agitation, Sir Robert now proceeded to introduce such measures as might, he conceived, ameliorate the evils of which Ireland complained. He proposed a large augmentation of the government grant to the Roman Catholic College at Maynooth, and the erection, at the national expense, of six other colleges—the famous "Queen's," or "Godless Colleges"—which should be thrown open to all sects of religion, while no particular system of theology was taught therein. Turning to financial considerations, the successful minister then carried the renewal, for another triennium, of the income tax, and a further revision of the tariff. So far, all

went well. The government had succeeded in its every measure, but almost insensibly its power was diminishing. Its once triumphant majority gradually decreased, and the opposition, which every one had thought crushed, began to raise its head. The fact was, the Anti-Corn-Law League was daily gaining fresh accessions of strength, and the Whig leader, Lord John Russell, was preparing to declare himself converted to its doctrines. Sir Robert himself was by this time convinced that free trade in corn could not be much longer delayed, but he was unable as yet to contend with the more bigoted Conservatives of his own party. Not from the opposition, however, nor from Peel's own adherents, came the great shock which once more broke up the Tory party. It was Heaven's visitation in the shape of a famine in Ireland.

For years the lower orders of Ireland had been so dependent upon the potato as their principal food, that the loss of the potato crop was equivalent to a sentence of starvation. The danger of this state of things had often been pointed out. Towards the close of 1845, it unhappily became apparent that this danger was at hand, for the potato plant generally was found to be affected by a mysterious disease, and millions of men, women, and children were, accordingly, threatened with all the dire severities of famine.

Sir Robert fully comprehended the urgency of the crisis, and expressed to the cabinet his fears that the ports must now be thrown open for the admission of all kinds of provisions. But he was met with a violent opposition. Lord Stanley and his immediate

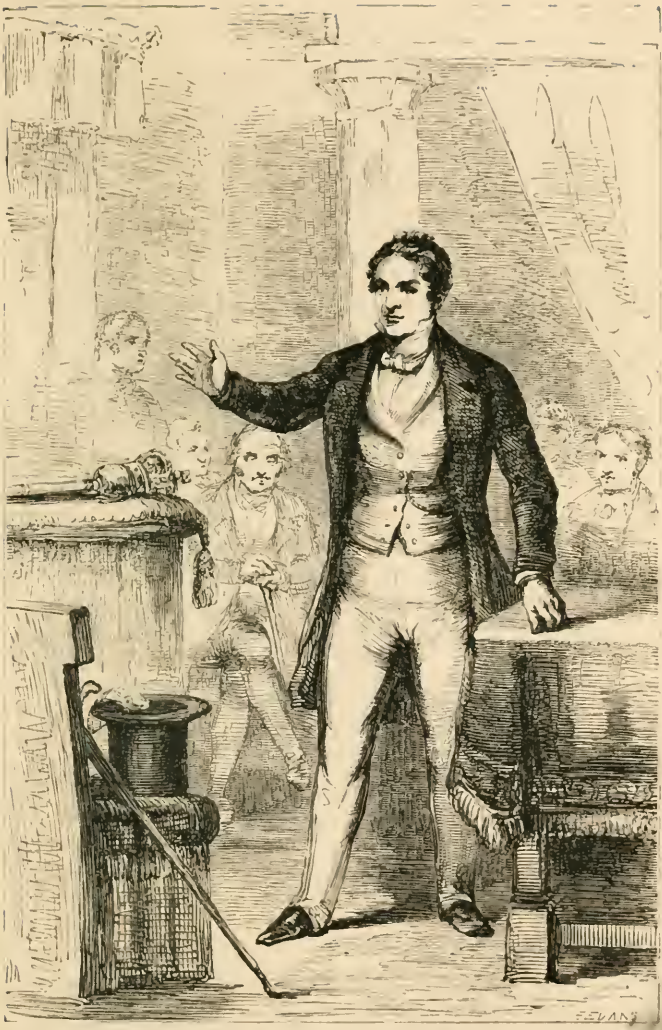
friends would not suffer the landed interest to be defrauded of their favourite "protection." The cabinet, therefore, hesitated, and at length separated, without coming to any decision, and a further prorogation of Parliament was announced.

This, then, was the moment chosen by Lord John Russell to shake the stability of the Peel ministry. From Edinburgh he addressed a letter to his constituents (November 22, 1845), in which he plainly expressed his opinion that a repeal of the corn-laws could no longer be delayed. He had made, he said, several attempts to settle the question on the moderate basis of a fixed duty, but "the present first lord of the treasury met them in 1839, 1840, and 1841, by eloquent panegyrics on the existing system—the plenty it had caused, the rural happiness it had diffused. He met the propositions for diminished protection in the same way in which he had met the offer of securities for Protestant interests in 1817 and 1825—in the same way in which he met the proposal to allow Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham to send members to Parliament in 1830. The result of resistance to qualified concessions must be the same in the present instance as in those I have mentioned. It is no longer worth while to contend for a fixed duty."

Sir Robert, on the publication of this startling manifesto, again summoned his cabinet to discuss the nature of the situation. The attempt was vain to conquer the opposition of the Protectionist party, and on the 6th of December, 1845, Sir Robert abandoned the helm, and resolved to leave to Lord John Russell the toil and the glory of carrying the repeal of the Corn Laws. The Queen sent for the Whig statesman, but,

to his mortification, he found himself unable to construct an administration of any influence or possible permanency, owing to Earl Grey's discreditable intrigue against Lord Palmerston, Lord John's proposed Foreign Secretary. Sir Robert, therefore, was again summoned to the Queen's councils, and intrusted with the duty of resuscitating his former ministry, which he did, with the exception of Lord Stanley, and one or two minor changes. He was also promised Lord John's support in carrying through Parliament the Corn-law Repeal measure.

At this time the vast majority of the nation had made up their mind for free trade, and the House of Commons accordingly sided with the minister in pressing onward the measures necessary for the destruction of monopoly. The great question was brought before the House on the 27th of January, in one of Peel's ablest and most plausible speeches. The debate which followed was one of peculiar interest and historical importance. Disraeli now poured out upon the head of the devoted minister the vitriol of his wit, and angry Protectionists, betrayed by him in whom they had trusted, and for whom they had laboured, hounded on the able partisan to the attack with vengeful cheers. Sir Robert defended himself with all his ingenuity, tact, wealth of resources, and consummate knowledge of the House, supported by the lucid arguments of Cobden, the veritable apostle of free trade, and the impassioned pleadings of sturdy John Bright. The voice of protection was loud, but the voice of the country was louder, and the free trade measures were carried by a majority of ninety-eight (May 15th, 1846).



Sir Robert Peel making his Memorable Speech on the Repeal of the Corn Laws.—p. 295.

But the party he had deserted or trifled with were determined upon revenge, and seized an early opportunity to drive him from his seat as Prime Minister. This was effected by a coalition with the Whigs on the question of a new Coercion Bill for Ireland. After a series of spirited debates, and a vast amount of political manœuvring, the government was defeated by the large majority of 73, on Thursday, the 25th of June. Sir Robert made his last address to the House, in a ministerial capacity, on the 29th, when he concluded with the memorable words, that if he left a name which should be execrated by monopolists, he trusted that it would sometimes be remembered, and perhaps with good-will, by those who recruited their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter because it was no longer leavened by a sense of injustice.

Lord John Russell now came into office, but hardly into power. He had few able colleagues, and his supporters did not form a phalanx compact and numerous, like that which, a few short months before, had exulted in the leadership of Sir Robert Peel. He was often compelled to rely upon his rival, who still retained a powerful personal following, for support; but, on the other hand, it must be admitted that the difficulties with which he had to grapple might well have tasked to their utmost the heart and brain of any statesman. These, however, it is not here our province to discuss.

One of Sir Robert's last great speeches was in favour of the government measure for the repeal of the Navigation Laws—a necessary corollary of free trade, which was almost as vehemently opposed, and has since been almost as patiently endured as the

repeal of the Corn-laws. Sir Robert also supported the measure for the admission of Jews into Parliament which, however, he did not live to see pass into law. In the session of 1848 he became less certain in his support of the Whig ministry, and it began to be whispered that the great statesman was not so sincere as he had thought himself in his total renunciation of power. There was a want, indeed, of a strong and progressive administration, and such an administration could, perhaps, have best been formed by an union of Sir Robert's followers with the abler members of the Whig party. Some such coalition we have lived to see carried into effect, and not without success.

On Friday, the 28th of June, 1850, closed a long debate, provoked by the famous Pacifico quarrel, on Lord Palmerston's foreign policy. Upon this occasion Sir Robert made his last speech in the House of Commons, and in opposition to the government. On Saturday, the 29th of June, he left home, on horseback, about five P.M., to take an airing, as was his wont. He rode first to Buckingham Palace, and then proceeded slowly up Constitution Hill. As he moved onward it was observed that his horse was restive and unmanageable, and that the rider sat uneasily in his seat, and seemed likely to lose his stirrups, when, suddenly checking the horse, the spirited animal plunged and flung him headlong. He fell upon his face with considerable violence. Help was immediately at hand; he was placed in a carriage, and removed with care to his residence in Whitehall Gardens. Dr. Foucart and Sir James Clark, who were near the spot when the accident occurred, accompanied him home, where they were soon joined by Sir Benjamin Brodie and other

eminent medical men. By their direction Sir Robert was placed upon a hydraulic bed, from which he never rose again. He had received a severe fracture of the left collar-bone, and of the fifth rib, with serious internal injuries, and, from the first, little hope of his recovery was entertained. He retained his senses, and recognized the friends who gathered round him, up to a late hour on Tuesday, July 2nd. At ten o'clock on the evening of that day, the last medical bulletin informed the anxious crowds who had gathered round the dying statesman's mansion that "Sir Robert had been getting rapidly worse since seven o'clock," and after partaking of the sacrament, according to the usage of the Anglican Church, he tranquilly bade adieu to his family and friends, and expired at nine minutes after eleven, on the 2nd of July, 1850.

In private life Sir Robert Peel always bore a stainless character, and was, as his panegyrist has said, almost without error. His tastes were pure and elevated. He loved art and literature, and liberally encouraged their professors. His acts of charity were numerous, but never ostentatious. Of his position as a great English commoner he was justly proud, and throughout his long political career, never appropriated to himself a place, a pension, or a ribbon. As a father he was even-tempered and liberal. Of his excellencies as a son and husband rumour has always spoken loudly. He had married, in 1820, Julia, daughter of General Sir John Floyd, and by her had issue five sons and two daughters: 1. Julia, Viscountess Villiers; 2. Sir Robert Peel, M.P., now Chief Secretary for Ireland; 3. Frederic Peel, M.P., now

Secretary to the Treasury; 4. the late Captain Sir William Peel, R.N., the gallant hero of the "Shannon Brigade;" 5. John Floyd Peel; 6. Arthur Wellesley Peel; and 7. Eliza Peel.

We may sum up our brief biography of this eminent statesman by quoting the opinions of two very opposite critics.

First, let us hear what is said by his sarcastic opponent, the Right Hon. B. Disraeli, in his "Life of Lord George Bentinck":—"Nature," he says "had combined in Sir Robert Peel many admirable parts. In him a physical frame incapable of fatigue was united with an understanding equally vigorous and flexible. He was gifted with the faculty of method in the highest degree, and with great powers of application, which were sustained by a prodigious memory; while he could communicate his acquisitions with clear and fluent elocution. Such a man, under any circumstances and in any sphere of life, would probably have become remarkable. Ordained from his youth to be busied with the affairs of a great empire, such a man, after long years of observation, practice, and perpetual discipline, would have become what Sir Robert Peel was in the latter portion of his life, a transcendent administrator of public business and a matchless master of debate in a popular assembly. In the course of time the method which was natural to Sir Robert Peel, had matured into a habit of such expertness that no one in the despatch of affairs ever adapted the means more fitly to the end; his original flexibility had ripened into consummate tact; his memory had accumulated such stores of political information that he could bring luminously

together all that was necessary to establish or to illustrate a subject; while in the House of Commons he was equally eminent in exposition and in reply: in the first, distinguished by his arrangement, his clearness, and his completeness; in the second, ready, ingenious, and adroit, prompt in detecting the weak side of his adversary and dexterous in extricating himself from an embarrassing position. . . . . The taste of Sir Robert Peel was highly cultivated, but it was not originally fine; he had no wit; but he had a keen sense of the ridiculous, and an abundant vein of genuine humour. Notwithstanding his artificial reserve, he had a hearty and a merry laugh; and sometimes his mirth was uncontrollable. He was gifted with an admirable organ; perhaps the finest that has been heard in the House in our days, unless we except the thrilling tones of O'Connell. He may be said to have gradually introduced a new style of speaking into the House of Commons, which was suited to the age in which he chiefly flourished, and to the novel elements of the assembly which he had to guide."

Respecting Sir Robert Peel's merits as a statesman, his biographer, Mr. Doubleday, writes:—"In any estimate of character it must be admitted that his peculiar constitution of intellect rendered him, as to certain points, liable to a degree of timidity and want of moral fortitude inimical to his career as a statesman, and especially as a British statesman. His mind was not an expanded one, although as far as it went its faculties were complete and admirable. Hence, in matters of practical administration he always attained his end. His new modelling of the Irish police, and his plan for the London police

constabulary force, are living proofs of this. His knowledge of mankind, and instinctive perception of the means by which, without knowing it, they might be governed, were in truth probably never exceeded. His judgment, as to the tendency and probable direction of opinion, was also wonderfully fine, and amounted to a high degree of foresight. Hence of tact, astuteness, and the faculty of never being caught off his guard, not irritated by an apparently sudden obstacle, he was thoroughly possessed; and hence came his wonderful command of the House of Commons. In his most apparently impassioned passages he never compromised himself nor his policy; never swerved for a moment from that plausible logic which, in the House of Commons, won him the ear both of the grave and the gay; and never failed so to shape that logic as to make it suit at once the feelings and ratiocinations of hearers, the depth of both of which he could sound with all the precision of science and certainty of instinct."

THE EARL OF ABERDEEN.

(A.D. 1784—1856.)

"It behoves the high
For their own sake to do things worthily."
BEN JONSON.

THESE brief biographical sketches may not inaptly close with a *resumé* of the career of a statesman not long since deceased—one of the last of the "old school," bred up in the traditions of the revolutionary war, and scarcely able to keep pace with the more liberal tendencies of a progressive age. The life of the Earl of Aberdeen is, moreover, instructive as a proof of the great weight which, in England, attaches to purity of character and rectitude of purpose. The earl was neither a great orator nor a far-seeing statesman; he lacked the sagacity of a Peel and the versatility of a Palmerston; his name was not popularly associated with any brilliant services, nor was he by constitution or nature fitted to obtain the applause of the many. Yet he attained to the highest political dignity in the Imperial government, and exercised, both in Parliament and with the country, a considerable influence. It was the influence of honesty of conduct and singleness of motive. Men knew that the earl possessed but respectable talents; they also knew that those talents were

honestly employed to further what he considered the interests of his country, and even when his policy was disputed the principles which guided it were never called in question.

George Hamilton Gordon, fourth Earl of Aberdeen, was born in 1784. The earldom, a Scotch one, was created in 1632, but in the Imperial legislature the earl sat as Viscount Gordon of Aberdeen, a creation dating from 1814, when a Tory government was bent upon bringing forward its younger and abler advocates. To the earldom he succeeded in 1801, while yet a minor, upon the death of his grandfather; his father, Lord Haddo, having died some years before.

The earl was educated at Harrow, which has proved the Alma Mater of so many eminent Englishmen, and was the contemporary there of Sir Robert Peel and Lord Byron. From thence he was removed to Cambridge, a ripe scholar, and speedily distinguished himself by his classical acquisitions. He obtained there the degree of Master of Arts. Thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Greek literature which, at that time, was the inspiration of the best students of Cambridge, he hastened, upon closing his university career, to visit the land of so many glories and such terrible misfortunes, and his dilettante enthusiasm was ridiculed by Byron in the celebrated couplet in "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers":—

> "First in the oat-fed phalanx shall be seen
> The travell'd thane, Athenian Aberdeen."

Returning from his continental travels he entered

public life as one of the sixteen Scotch representative peers for whom the Act of Union provides seats in the House of Peers. He was thus, by his position, debarred from that best training for all public men, a career in the House of Commons. At this date (1806) he was but twenty-two years of age, and it is difficult to account for his election except upon the ground that his Tory principles must have been very warmly manifested. Though unable to make any conspicuous figure in debate, for he was devoid of any oratorical qualification, his administrative abilities were duly appreciated by the chiefs of his party, and so high an opinion was entertained of his tact and prudence that the first public mission with which he was entrusted was one of the utmost delicacy and the highest importance. After the failure of Napoleon's famous expedition to Russia, the British government resolved upon the formation of a general coalition of the great European powers. Russia, Prussia, and Sweden readily acceded, but it was desirable to include Austria in the formidable league. To effect this object Lord Aberdeen was despatched to the court of Vienna, where, in spite of obvious difficulties, he acquitted himself with ability, and accomplished his mission successfully.

He was immediately employed on a similar enterprise. Napoleon's downfall was now considered probable, and the British government became anxious to weaken him by securing the defection of his brother-in-law, Murat, then King of Naples. The Italian army, under Napoleon's viceroy, Eugene Beauharnois, was being directed against Austria from the side of Italy, and it was seen that a powerful diversion would thus

be effected, which must draw the forces of Austria from the Allied army to protect her own dominions. To counteract this movement it became necessary, if possible, to bribe Murat into joining the great European league against his imperial benefactor. Lord Aberdeen was accordingly despatched to the Neapolitan court. The errand was a difficult and a delicate one. Murat was bound to Napoleon by the ties of relationship and gratitude; but his vanity and his selfishness afforded Aberdeen an opening for attack. He represented to him that Napoleon's fall was no longer problematical, but a certainty; that France could not hope to withstand the formidable coalition now bristling upon her frontiers. If at once he made common cause with the Allies, and proved his sincerity by declaring war against the French viceroy of Italy, the Allies, in their turn, would ignore the claims of the Neapolitan Bourbons, and guarantee to him the throne of Naples for himself and his heirs. Murat was conquered by these arguments, and by Lord Aberdeen's adroit appeals to his vanity. He joined the allies; and the "travell'd thane" returned to England to receive the thanks of his government for the diplomatic victory he had achieved.

For a long period after the battle of Waterloo Aberdeen disappeared from public life. He was no orator, he was not even an efficient debater; and in the great struggles which disturbed the reign of George IV. he contented himself with taking a silent part, and recording his vote in favour of the Tory government. But his excellent adminstrative talents had attracted the attention of a statesman who was particularly fortunate in his selection of his subor-

dinates; and when Sir Robert Peel came into power in 1828, Lord Aberdeen, after a brief apprenticeship as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, entered official life as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

As Foreign Minister he followed a cautious and pacific policy, somewhat coloured by his natural prejudices in favour of legitimacy and prescriptive rights, but on the whole successful, and uniformly moderate and dignified. As a member of the cabinet he, of course, agreed to the removal of Roman Catholic disabilities, and the repeal of the Test Act—measures which both by his voice and votes he energetically supported.

From 1830 to 1841 Lord Aberdeen was out of office, and would almost have been forgotten by the public, but for his efforts to effect a pacific settlement of the theological war which broke out between the two great parties of the Scottish Ecclesiastical Establishment, and finally resulted in the formation of the "Free Church." His well-intentioned efforts were less successful than his diplomacy at Vienna and Naples. He who interferes in the differences of religious sects not only finds his exertions disregarded, but his motives too often misunderstood. Lord Aberdeen attempted to serve both parties, and was distrusted by both.

In 1841, on the formation of Sir Robert Peel's second administration, Lord Aberdeen resumed the seals of the Foreign Office. The two great questions which he was called upon to settle during his second lease of power were the war with China, and the Oregon Territory dispute. The former he concluded satisfactorily, by a treaty which, without unjust en-

croachments upon the principles and policy of the Chinese, opened up a new and important channel to English commercial enterprise. In the latter, his policy is more open to question. The United States claimed as their own a territory which had never belonged to them, and bolstered up their claim by the production of fictitious maps. It was a claim which openly threatened the security of Canada, and offered the States an advantage, of which in case of war they would not be slow to avail themselves. Recent events have sufficiently demonstrated this important truth to the British public. It is, therefore, to be regretted that a firm opposition was not made at once to the encroachments of the American Republic. To settle the points in dispute Lord Ashburton was sent out as a special commissioner by the British government, but he yielded to the Americans everything the Americans claimed; and it only remained for Lord Aberdeen to approve of the doings of his plenipotentiary and sign what Lord Palmerston called the "Ashburton Capitulation."

In 1846 the Peel adminstration was overthrown by the united efforts of Whig and Protectionists, and Lord Aberdeen once more retired from official life. He was to re-enter it in a capacity which he had probably never dreamed of. Both Whig and Tory governments had endeavoured to enlist in their behalf the sympathies of the country, and neither had met with a satisfactory response. On Lord John Russell's failure in 1852, he was succeeded by Lord Derby, but the Tory Ministry could not retain office a twelvemonth. The Peelites, as the small but able band of men who had been bred by Sir Robert Peel, and had

accepted his political principles as their creed, were called, combining with the Whigs and Radicals, presented a formidable phalanx, which out-numbered the forces of the Conservative chief. It was then deemed desirable to construct an administration which should include the best talents of each of the three political parties—Whig, Radicals, and Peelites; and to sooth the jealousies of the rival leaders, the premiership it was proposed to entrust to the hands of some peer whose claims should not be such as to excite prejudice or arouse rivalry, while he should command the confidence of the country by respectability of character and moderation of views. Such a man was found in the Earl of Aberdeen; and the "Coalition Ministry" was formed under his auspices (April 1852). It included Lord Palmerston, Lord Russell, Gladstone, Sidney Herbert, Sir James Graham, and the Duke of Newcastle; in a word, the lion and the lamb lay down together in strange co-partnership. It had to deal with one great difficulty in the Russian war—a war which it seems probable might have been averted by a little more energy of action and plainness of speech on the part of Aberdeen and his colleagues. It was a disastrous war. It begun in imbecility, was carried on with timidity, and ended in a collapse. Yet it was not without its advantageous results. A blow was dealt at the power of Russia from which that unwieldy empire will not for many years recover; and if its immediate consequence was the aggrandisement of France, England has been immeasurably benefited by the thorough reorganization of her army and navy which was forced on her by the grievous disasters in the Crimea. Notwithstanding many useful reforms

effected by Lord Aberdeen's administration, those disasters, for which the system rather than the men must be considered responsible, shipwrecked it irretrievably. The nation, wroth at the loss of its best and bravest in the fatal mud depths of Balaclava, inveighed loudly against the supposed incapacity of Sidney Herbert, the secretary-at-war, and the Duke of Newcastle, the colonial secretary. In true British fashion, it wanted victims. Lord John Russell, the ministerial leader in the House of Commons, unable to face the storm, or defend the mishaps which had originated it, resigned office. Weakened by the defection of so potent an ally the Aberdeen cabinet tottered on the verge of dissolution, and when the House of Commons decided in favour of the appointment of a committee to inquire into the alleged maladministration of the war, Lord Aberdeen felt that he could no longer hold his position with honour to himself or advantage to his country, and gave in his resignation. He was succeeded by his late colleague, Lord Palmerston, to whom the public voice had unanimously pointed as the man most competent to deal with the difficulties and perils of the hour.

From this time until his death in 1860, the Earl of Aberdeen virtually retired into private life. He occasionally made his appearance in the House of Lords and voted and spoke on the ministerial side during the administration of Lord Palmerston, but he no longer took an active part in public affairs. It is understood, however, that his opinions to the last were much consulted, and highly valued by her Majesty and the late Prince Consort. His integrity and strict conscientiousness secured him the respect of

every political party, and the confidence of his countrymen. Thus, full of years and honours, after a career distinguished by usefulness rather than by brilliancy, the gray old statesman sank placidly into the grave. His eldest son, Lord Haddo, succeeded to his titles and estates.

His character has been briefly sketched from two different points of view by two widely different writers —by Mr. Doubleday, the author of a trustworthy life of Sir Robert Peel, and by a contributor to an hebdomadal periodical, the *London Review*. It will be seen from the following quotations that each pronounces a very similar verdict:—"Lord Aberdeen," says the *London Review*, "made no pretensions to rhetoric, but his speeches were marked by brevity, clearness, simplicity, and propriety. The desire to fill a space in the public eye, to be talked of in the newspapers, which inspires so many orators in both Houses, never brought him to his feet. No premier since the Reform Bill has spoken so little. His speeches were models of terseness. Never did he claim their lordships' attention, even when First Lord of the Treasury, except an absolute necessity drove him to explain or defend the measures or views of his administration. His speeches were always marked by good sense—by that quality of judiciousness, in fact, which distinguished him above his contemporaries."

Mr. Doubleday observes:—"The political character of Lord Aberdeen is easily summed up. Like Sir Robert Peel, he was a Conservative with few apparently Liberal tendencies. His principal merit consisted in his caution; and his practical knowledge of the immediate requirements of the time. As a debater

he was heavy, and somewhat pompous. His diction was that of a scholar, but his speeches were destitute of that vivacity which high talent alone can give, and without which a man may be a speaker but not an orator."

INDEX.

A.

Aberdeen, Earl of, life, character, and death, 305—314.
Abolition of Slavery, 282.
Addington, Henry (Lord Sidmouth), 188, 190, 237, 238.
Addison, Secretary of State, 99.
Administrations, List of, 9.
Althorpe, Lord, 282, 283.
All the Talents, satire by Canning, 241.
Anne, Queen, death of, 99.
American Colonies, The, their discontent, 148—155.
Anti-Jacobin, The, 232.
Arrest of the Five Members, 60.
Argyle, Duke of, 99.
Assassinations, and attempts at, 13, 92, 116, 213.
Ashburton, Lord, 309, 310.
Austerlitz, Battle of, 192, 207.

B.

Baillie, Dr., account of Strafford's Trial, 21.
Bath, To the Nymph of, an epigram, 139.
Battersea, Bolingbroke's House at, 103.
Benevolences exacted, 39.
Bishop's War, The, 18.
Bolingbroke, Viscount, Life and Character of, 85—104.
Boscawen, Admiral, 141.
Buckingham, Duke of, slain, 13.
Burke, Edmund, 149.
Burnet, Bishop, character of Anne Hyde, 79.
Bute, Earl of, 143, 145, 146.
Byng, Admiral, Trial of, 138.
Byron, Lord, opinion of Peel, 257; allusion to Earl of Aberdeen, 306.

C.

Canning, duel with Castlereagh, 213, 244.
Canning, George, his life, character, and death, 227—255.
Caroline, Queen of George II, 121.
Caroline, Queen of George IV., 247.
Castlereagh, Lord (Marquis of Londonderry), his life, character, and death, 199—226.
Cavaliers and Roundheads, 58.
Chalgrove Field, 66.
Chatham, Earl of, life, character, and death of, 123—158.
Chatham, Earl of, son of ditto, 212.
Chesterfield, Earl of, character of Bolingbroke, 85.
Chiswick, Villa at, 253.
Clarendon, Earl of, his character of Hampden, 55.
Clarendon, Earl of, his life and character, 70—84.
Cobden, Richard, 298.
Coercion Bill, 284, 299.
Compton, Sir Spencer, 120.
Conservatism, 285.
Congress of Vienna, 215, 216.

Congress of Verona, 222.
Conway, General, 149, 150.
Copenhagen, Bombardment of, 209.
Corn Laws, Repeal of, 287, 290, 291, 297, 298.
Cornwallis, Lord, 204.
Corporation Act, The, 267.
Cowper, character of Earl of Chatham, 123, 158.
Crisis, The, 108.
Cromwell, Oliver, designs to emigrate, 48.
Cumberland, Duke of, 148.

D.

Danish Fleet, Seizure of, 209.
Derby, Earl of, 289, 296, 310.
Dundas, Henry (Lord Melville), 169, 191.
Dunkirk, sale of, 81.

E.

Eden, Hon. Eleanor, 182.
Edinburgh, Lord John Russell's Letter from, 297.
Eldon, Lord Chancellor, 263.
Elizabeth of Bohemia, 35.
Emancipation, Catholic, 188, 201, 205, 235, 265, 267, 269, 270, 272.
Epigrams, 139, 187, 212, 229, 237, 238.
Epitaph on Hampden's Wife, 43.
Examiner, The, 91.
Erskine, Lord, 195.

F.

Family Compact, The, 144.
Fox, Henry (Lord Holland), 133, 134, 137, 140, 146.
Fox, Charles James, 164, 171, 172, 173, 174, 240.

G.

George I., Accession of, 99.
George II., Accession of, 120; love for his queen, 121; death of, 142.
George III., Accession of, 143; domestic life of, 178.
Gladstone, Rt. Hon. W., 289, 311.
Gloucester Lodge, 244.
Goderich, Lord, his administration, 267.
Godolphin, Lord, 89.
Grammont, character of Anne Hyde, 79.
Granville, Lord, 130, 131.
Grenville, George, 146, 147, 149, 151, 240.
Grey, Earl, 276, 280, 281, 283.
Guiscard attempts to assassinate Harley, 92.

H.

Hampden, John, his life, death, and character, 34—69.
Hampdens, their descent, 34.
Hampden, Great, the Manor-House, 42.
Happy Warrior, Wordsworth's character of, 36.
Harley, Earl of Oxford, his intrigues, 90; attempted assassination, 92; elevated to the peerage, 94; his downfall, 98; impeachment, 107.
Hawke, Admiral, 141.
Hayes, in Kent, Pitt's Villa at, 147, 153, 157, 159.
Henrietta Maria, 60.
Holwood Hill, Kent, 182.
Horace, Translation from, by William Pitt, 164.
Huskisson, 244.
Hyde, Anne, marries Duke of York, 79; her death, 79; character by De Grammont and Bishop Burnet, 79.

I.

Impeachments of Strafford, 21; Clarendon, 83; Bolingbroke, 100; Harley, 107; Melville, 191.
India Bill, The, 175.
Ireland, Condition of, 260.
Irish Catholics, Revolt of, 57.

J.

Jacobites, The, hopes of, 107.
James I., Character of, 28.

K.

Kendal, Duchess of, 119
Kimble, Great, Ship-money at, 5.
Knife-Grinder, The, by Canning,

L.

Leipsic, Battle of, 21.
Letters from Wentworth to his Wife, 16, 27; from King Charles to Strafford, 25; Strafford to Charles I., 28.
Lisbon, Canning's Embassy to, 245.
Liverpool, Earl of, 245, 251, 259.
Londonderry, Marquis of, see *Castlereagh.*
Lyndhurst, Lord, 252, 253.

M.

Macaulay, on the conduct of Charles I., 29; the Great Protestation, 42; Hampden's character, 69; Earl of Clarendon's difficult position, 81; Sir Robert Walpole, 116; Earl of Chatham, 143, 151; William Pitt, 159, 167, 177, 197.
Mansfield, Earl of, 133.
Marlborough, Duke of, 88, 91, 95.
Marlborough, Duchess of, 90, 130.
Masham, Mrs., 89, 90.
Melbourne, Lord, 283, 286.
Microcosm, The, 229.
Mulgrave, Lord, 186,
Murat, King of Naples, 307.

N.

National Debt, The, 110.
Navigation Laws, Repeal of, 299.
Newburn-on-Tyne, 53.
Newcastle, Duke of, 129, 131, 133, 135, 136, 137.
North, Lord, 116, 166, 172.
North Briton, The, 147.

O.

O'Connell, Daniel, 260, 261, 292, 293, 294.
O'Connell, proposed duel with Sir R. Peel, 262.
Oregon Territory, 309.

P.

P.'s, The Three, 139.
Palmerston, Lord, 276, 298, 300, 312.
Parliament, The Long, 19, 56, 57, *et passim.*
Parliamentary Reform, proposed by Pitt, 170; by Lord Russell, 274.
Peel, Sir Robert, his life, character, and death, 256—304.
Peerage Bill, 111.
Pelham, Henry, 130, 131.
Perceval, Mr., Assassination of, 213; character, 242, 257.
Peterloo, Massacre at, 221, 264.
Peter Pindar, 228.
Petition of Right, 40.
Pitt Diamond, The, 124.
Pitt, Thomas, 123.
Pitt, William, see *Chatham, Earl of.*
Pitt, William, life, death, and character, 159—198.
Poland, Dismemberment of, 216.
Poor Law (New) Bill, 283.
Pope praises Bolingbroke, 85; Essay on Man, 104.
Pretender, The, Plots in favour of, 89, 97, 101, 131.
Pretyman, Dr., Pitt's Tutor, 162.
Pulteney (Earl of Bath), 122, 126, 129.
Pym impeaches Strafford, 20.

Q.

Queen's Colleges, 295.

R.

Reform Bill, The, Progress of 274—281.
Remonstrance, The Grand, 74.
Repeal of the Union, 273, 293.

Richmond, Duke of, 156, 157.
Robinson, Sir Thomas, 133.
Rockingham, Marquis of, 150, 155, 169.
Roundheads and Cavaliers, 58.
Royalists, Distresses of, 77.
Rupert, Prince, Skirmishes by, 65.
Russell, Lord John (now Earl), 267, 274, 286, 287, 288, 290, 291, 297, 299, 312.

S.

Schism Act, The, 98, 108.
Scotland, War with, 18, 49, 53.
Scott, Sir Walter, on William Pitt, 159.
Shelburne, Lord, 167, 169, 171.
Shrewsbury, Duke of, 99.
Ship Money, 45.
Six Acts, The, 221.
South Sea Bubble, 113, 114, 115.
Spanish Colonies in America, Independence of, 249.
St. John, Oliver, 47.
Stamp Duties, The, 148.
Stanhope, Lord, 110, 111.
Stanhope, Lady Hester, 185.
Steele, Sir Richard, 103.
Strachan, Sir Richard, 262.
Strafford, Earl of, his life, 11—33; his trial, 19—27; his execution, 31; Whitelocke's character, 33.
Subsidies, System of, 135.
Sunderland, Earl of, 110.
Swift, attacks on the Whigs, 91.

T.

Test Act, The, 267.
Thame, 67.
Thurlow, Lord Chancellor, 169.
Tilsit, Treaty of, 208.
Tierney, duel with Pitt, 183.
Treaty of Utrecht, 94, 95, 96, 97.
Trial of Strafford, 19—27.
Trafalgar, Battle of, 193.

U.

Union of Great Britain and Ireland, 187, 201, 204.
United Irishmen, 202.
United States, War with, 148—155.
Utrecht, Treaty of, 94, 95, 96, 97.

V.

Vernon, Admiral, fails at Carthagena, 128.
Verona, Congress of, 222.
Victoria, Queen, Accession of, 287.
Vienna, Congress of, 215.

W.

Walcheren Expedition, The, 211, 258.
Walpole, Horace, 131, 132, 135, 136, 138, 141.
Walpole, Sir Robert, life and character of, 105—122.
Wellesley, Marquis, 206.
Wellington, Duke of, last interview with Pitt, 194; Peninsular War, 210; his administration, 266—276.
Wentworth, Thomas, afterwards Earl of Strafford, 11—33.
Wharton, Duke of, 114.
Whitbread satirized by Canning, 239.
Wilkes, John, arrest of, 147.
Wilberforce, William, 173, 189.
William IV., accession of, 275; his death, 287.
Wolfe, General, 141.

Y.

York, Duke of, marries Anne Hyde, 79.

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